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CONDENSED NOVELS

NEW BURLESQUES

BY

BRET HARTE

WITH A PORTRAIT

LONDON
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1902

CONTENTS

PAGE

RUPERT THE RESEMBLER 1
By A-th--y H-pe.

THE STOLEN CIGAR CASE 33
By A. Co--n D--le.

GOLLY AND THE CHRISTIAN, OR THE MINX AND THE MANXMAN. 57
By H-ll C--ne.

THE ADVENTURES OF JOHN LONGBOWE, YEOMAN . 95
Compiled from several eminent sources.

DAN'L BOREM 115
By E. N---s- W--t---t.

STORIES THREE—

FOR SIMLA REASONS 153

A PRIVATE'S HONOUR 165

JUNGLE FOLK 171
By R-dy--d K-pl--g.

'ZUT-SKI'. 181
By M-r-e C-r-lli.

RUPERT THE RESEMBLER

BY A-TH--Y H--PE

90

CHAPTER I

RUDOLPH OF TRULYRURALANIA

WHEN I state that I was own brother to Lord Burleydon, had an income of two thousand a year, could speak all the polite languages fluently, was a powerful swordsman, a good shot, and could ride anything from an elephant to a clothes-horse, I really think I have said enough to satisfy any feminine novel-reader of Bayswater or South Kensington that I was a hero. My brother's wife, however, did not seem to incline to this belief.

'A more conceited, self-satisfied little cad I never met than you,' she said. 'Why don't you try to do something instead of sneering at others who do? You never take anything seriously—except yourself, which isn't worth it. You are proud of your red hair and peaked

nose just because you fondly believe that you get them from the Prince of Trulyruralania, and are willing to think evil of your ancestress to satisfy your snobbish little soul. Let me tell you, sir, that there was no more truth about that than there was in that silly talk of her partiality for her husband's red-haired game-keeper in Scotland. Ah! that makes you start —don't it? But I have always observed that a mule is apt to remember only the horse-side of his ancestry!'

Whenever my pretty sister-in-law talks in this way I always try to forget that she came of a family far inferior to our own—the Razor-bills. Indeed, her people—of the Nonconformist stock—really had nothing but wealth and rectitude, and I think my brother Bob, in his genuine love for her, was willing to overlook the latter for the sake of the former.

My pretty sister-in-law's interest in my affairs always made me believe that she secretly worshipped me—although it was a fact, as will be seen in the progress of this story, that most

women blushed on my addressing them. I used to say it 'was the reflection of my red hair on a transparent complexion,' which was rather neat—wasn't it? And subtle? But then, I was always saying such subtle things.

'My dear Rose,' I said, laying down my egg spoon (the egg spoon really had nothing to do with this speech, but it imparted such a delightfully realistic flavour to the scene), 'I'm not to blame if I resemble the S'helpburgs.'

'It's your being so beastly proud of it that I object to!' she replied. 'And for Heaven's sake! try to *be* something and not merely resemble things! The fact is you resemble too much—you're *always* resembling. You resemble a man of fashion, and you're not; a wit, and you're not; a soldier, a sportsman, a hero—and you're none of 'em. Altogether, you're not in the least convincing. Now, listen! There's a good chance for you to go as our *attaché* with Lord Mumblepeg, the new Ambassador to Cochin China. In all the novels, you know, *attachés* are always the

confidants of Grand Duchesses, and know more State secrets than their chiefs; in real life, I believe they are something like a City clerk with a leaning to private theatricals. Say you'll go! Do!'

'I'll take a few months' holiday first,' I replied, 'and then,' I added in my gay, dashing way, 'if the place is open—hang it if I don't go!'

'Good old bounder!' she said, 'and don't think too much of that precious Prince Rupert. He was a bad lot.'

She blushed again at me—as her husband entered.

'Take Rose's advice, Rupert, my boy,' he said, 'and go!'

And that is how I came to go to Truly-ruralania. For I secretly resolved to take my holiday in travelling in that country and trying, as dear Lady Burleydon put it, really to be somebody, instead of resembling anybody in particular. A precious lot *she* knew about it!

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH MY HAIR CAUSES A LOT OF THINGS

You go to Trulyruralania from Charing Cross. In passing through Paris we picked up Mlle. Beljambe, who was going to Köhlslau, the capital of Trulyruralania, to marry the Grand Duke Michael, who, however, as I was informed, was in love with the Princess Flirtia. She blushed on seeing me—but, I was told afterwards, declined being introduced to me on any account. However, I thought nothing of this, and went on to Bock, the next station to Köhlslau. At the little inn in the forest I was informed I was just in time to see the coronation of the new King the next day. The landlady and her daughter were very communicative, and, after the fashion of the simple, guileless stage peasant, instantly informed me

what everybody was doing, and at once explained the situation. She told me that the Grand Duke Michael—or Black Michael as he was called—himself aspired to the throne, as well as to the hand of the Princess Flirtia, but was hated by the populace, who preferred the young heir, Prince Rupert; because he had the hair and features of the dynasty of the S'helpburgs, 'which,' she added, 'are singularly like your own.'

'But is red hair so very peculiar here?' I asked.

'Among the Jews—yes, sire!—I mean yes, *sir*,' she corrected herself; 'you seldom see a red-headed Jew.'

'The Jews!' I repeated in astonishment.

'Of course you know the S'helpburgs are descended directly from Solomon—and have indeed some of his matrimonial peculiarities,' she said blushing.

I was amazed—but recalled myself. 'But why do they call the Duke of Köhlslau *Black Michael*?' I asked carelessly.

'Because he is nearly black, sir. You see, when the great Prince Rupert went abroad in the old time he visited England, Scotland and Africa. They say he married an African lady there—and that the Duke is really more in the direct line of succession than Prince Rupert.'

But here the daughter showed me to my room. She blushed, of course, and apologised for not bringing a candle, as she thought my hair was sufficiently illuminating. 'But,' she added with another blush, 'I do *so* like it.'

I replied by giving her something of no value—a Belgian nickel which wouldn't pass in Bock, as I had found to my cost. But my hair had evidently attracted attention from others, for on my return to the guest-room a stranger approached me, and in the purest and most precise German—the Court or 'Olland Hof speech—addressed me :

'Have you the red hair of the fair King or the hair of your father ?'

Luckily I was able to reply with the same purity and precision : 'I have both the hair of

the fair King and my own. But I have not the hair of my father nor of Black Michael, nor of the innkeeper nor the innkeeper's wife. The red *heir* of the fair King would be a son.'

Possibly this delicate *mot* on the approaching marriage of the King was lost in the translation, for the stranger strode abruptly away. I learned, however, that the King was actually then in Bock, at the castle a few miles distant, in the woods. I resolved to stroll thither.

It was a fine old mediæval structure. But, as the singular incidents I am about to relate combine the romantic and adventurous atmosphere of the middle ages with all the appliances of modern times, I may briefly state that the castle was lit by electricity, had fire-escapes on each of the turrets, four lifts, and was fitted up by one of the best West End establishments. The sanitary arrangements were excellent, and the drainage of the most perfect order, as I had reason to know personally later. I was so affected by the peaceful solitude that I lay down under a tree and presently fell

asleep. I was awakened by the sound of voices, and, looking up, beheld two men bending over me. One was a grizzled veteran, and the other a younger dandyfied man ; both were dressed in shooting suits.

'Never saw such a resemblance before in all my life,' said the elder man. 'By my soul ! if the King hadn't got shaved yesterday because the Princess Flirtia said his beard tickled her, I'd swear it was he ! '

I could not help thinking how lucky it was for this narrative that the King *had* shaved, otherwise my story would have degenerated into a mere Comedy of Errors. Opening my eyes, I said boldly :

'Now that you are satisfied who I resemble, gentlemen, perhaps you will tell me who you are ? '

'Certainly,' said the elder curtly. 'I am Spitz—a simple Colonel of his Majesty's—yet, nevertheless, the one man who runs this whole dynasty—and this young gentleman is Fritz, my lieutenant. And you are—— ? '

'My name is Razorbill—brother to Lord Burleydon,' I replied calmly.

'Good heavens! another of the lot!' he muttered. Then, correcting himself, he said brusquely: 'Any relation to that English woman who was so sweet on the old Rupert centuries ago?'

Here, again, I suppose my sister-in-law would have had me knock down the foreign insulter of my English ancestress—but I coloured to the roots of my hair, and even farther—with pleasure at this proof of my royal descent! And then a cheery voice was heard calling:

'Spitz!' and 'Fritz!' through the woods.

'The King!' said Spitz to Fritz quickly. 'He must not see him.'

'Too late,' said Fritz, as a young man bounded lightly out of the bushes.

I was thunderstruck! It was as if I had suddenly been confronted with a mirror—and beheld myself! Of course he was not quite

so good-looking—or so tall—but he was still a colourable imitation! I was delighted.

Nevertheless, for a moment he did not seem to reciprocate my feeling. He stared at me, staggered back and passed his hand across his forehead. 'Can it be,' he muttered thickly, 'that I've got 'em agin? Yet I only had—shingle glash!'

But Fritz quickly interposed.

'Your Majesty is all right—though,' he added in a lower voice, 'let this be a warning to you for to-morrow! This gentleman is Mr. Razorbill—you know the old story of the Razorbills?—Ha! ha!'

But the King did not laugh; he extended his hand and said gently, 'You are welcome—my cousin!' Indeed, my sister-in-law would have probably said that—dissipated though he was—he was the only gentleman there.

'I have come to see the coronation, your Majesty,' I said.

'And you shall,' said the King heartily, 'and shall go with us! The show can't begin

without us—eh, Spitz?' he added playfully, poking the veteran in the ribs—'whatever Michael may do!'

Then he linked his arms in Spitz's and mine. 'Let's go to the hut—and have some supper and fizz,' he said gaily.

We went to the hut. We had supper. We ate and drank heavily. We danced madly around the table. Nevertheless I thought that Spitz and Fritz were worried by the King's potations, and Spitz at last went so far as to remind his Majesty that they were to start early in the morning for Köhlslau. I noticed also that as the King drank his speech grew thicker and Spitz and Fritz exchanged glances. At last Spitz said with stern significance:

'Your Majesty has not forgotten the test invariably submitted to the King at his coronation?'

'Shertenly not,' replied the King, with his reckless laugh. 'The King mush be able to pronounsh—name of his country—intel-lillil-gibly: mush shay (hic!): "I'm King of—King

of—Too-too-tooral-looral-anyer."' He staggered, laughed, and fell under the table.

'He cannot say it!' gasped Fritz and Spitz in one voice. 'He is lost!'

'Unless,' said Fritz suddenly, pointing at me with a flash of intelligence, '*he* can personate him, and say it. Can you?' he turned to me brusquely.

It was an awful moment. I had been drinking heavily, too, but I resolved to succeed. 'I'm King of Trooly-rooly——' I murmured—but I could not master it—I staggered and followed the King under the table.

'Is there no one here,' roared Spitz, 'who can shave thish dynasty, and shay "Tooral——"? No!——it! I mean—"Trularlooral"—' but he, too, lurched hopelessly forward.

'No one can say "Tooral-looral——"' muttered Fritz; and, grasping Spitz in despair, they both rolled under the table.

How long we lay there, Heaven knows! I was awakened by Spitz playing the garden hose on me. He was booted and spurred, with

Fritz by his side. The King was lying on a bench, saying feebly: 'Blesh you, my chillen.'

'By politely acceding to Black Michael's request to "Try our one-and-six Sherry," he has been brought to this condition,' said Spitz bitterly. 'It's a trick to keep him from being crowned. In this country if the King is crowned while drunk, the kingdom instantly reverts to a villain—no matter who. But in this case the villain is Black Michael. Ha! What say you, lad? Shall we frustrate the rascal, by having *you* personate the King?'

I was—well!—intoxicated at the thought! But what would my sister-in-law say? Would she—in her Nonconformist conscience—consider it strictly honourable? But I swept all scruples aside. A King was to be saved! 'I will go,' I said. 'Let us on to Köhlslau—riding like the wind!' We rode like the wind, furiously, madly. Mounted on a wild, dashing bay—known familiarly as the 'Bay of Biscay' from its rough turbulence, I easily kept the lead. But our horses began to fail. Sud-

denly Spitz halted, clapped his hand to his head and threw himself from his horse. 'Fools!' he said, 'we should have taken the train! It will get there an hour before we will!' He pointed to a wayside station where the 7.15 excursion train for Köhlslau was waiting.

'But how dreadfully unmediæval!—what will the public say?' I began.

'Bother the public!' he said gruffly. 'Who's running this dynasty—you or I? Come!' With the assistance of Fritz he tied up my face with a handkerchief to simulate toothache, and then, with a shout of defiance, we three rushed madly into a closely-packed third-class carriage.

Never shall I forget the perils, the fatigue, the hopes and fears of that mad journey. Panting, perspiring, packed together with cheap trippers, but exalted with the one hope of saving the King, we at last staggered out on the Köhlslau platform utterly exhausted. As we did so we heard a distant roar from the city. Fritz turned

an ashen gray, Spitz a livid blue. 'Are we too late?' he gasped, as we madly fought our way into the street, where shouts of 'The King,' 'The King,' were rending the air. 'Can it be Black Michael?' But here the crowd parted, and a procession, preceded by outriders, flashed into the square. And there, seated in a carriage beside the most beautiful red-haired girl I had ever seen, was the King—the King whom we had left two hours ago, dead-drunk in the hut in the forest!

CHAPTERS III TO XXII (Inclusive)

IN WHICH THINGS GET MIXED

We reeled against each other aghast! Spitz recovered himself first. 'We must fly!' he said, hoarsely. 'If the King has discovered our trick—we are lost!'

'But where shall we go?' I asked.

'Back to the hut.'

We caught the next train to Bock. An hour later we stood panting within the hut. Its walls and ceiling were splashed with sinister red stains. 'Blood!' I exclaimed, joyfully. 'At last we have a real mediæval adventure!'

'It's Burgundy, you fool,' growled Spitz; 'good Burgundy wasted!' At this moment Fritz appeared dragging in the hut-keeper.

'Where is the King?' demanded Spitz, fiercely, of the trembling peasant.

'He was carried away an hour ago by Black Michael and taken to the castle.'

'And when did he *leave* the castle?' roared Spitz.

'He never left the castle, sir, and, alas! I fear never will, alive!' replied the man, shuddering.

We stared at each other! Spitz bit his grizzled moustache. 'So,' he said bitterly, 'Black Michael has simply anticipated us with the same game! We have been tricked. I knew it could not be the King whom they crowned! No!' he added quickly, 'I see it all—it was Rupert of Glasgow!'

'Who is Rupert of Glasgow?' I cried.

'Oh, I really can't go over all that family rot again,' grunted Spitz. 'Tell him, Fritz.'

Then, taking me aside, Fritz delicately informed me that Rupert of Glasgow—a young Scotchman—claimed equally with myself de-

scent from the old Rupert, and that equally with myself he resembled the King. That Michael had got possession of him on his arrival in the country, kept him closely guarded in the castle, and had hid his resemblance in a black wig and false moustache ; that the young Scotchman, however, seemed apparently devoted to Michael and his plots ; and there was undoubtedly some secret understanding between them. That it was evidently Michael's trick to have the pretender crowned, and then, by exposing the fraud and the condition of the real King, excite the indignation of the duped people, and seat himself on the throne ! 'But,' I burst out, 'shall this base-born pretender remain at Köhlslau beside the beautiful Princess Flirtia ? Let us to Köhlslau at once and hurl him from the throne !'

'One pretender is as good as another,' said Spitz dryly. 'But leave *him* to me. 'Tis the King we must protect and succour ! As for that Scotch springald, before midnight I shall have him kidnapped, brought back to his

master in a close carriage and you—*you* shall take his place at Köhlslau.'

'I will,' I said enthusiastically, drawing my sword; 'but I have done nothing yet. Please let me kill something!'

'Aye, lad!' said Spitz, with a grim smile at my enthusiasm. 'There's a sheep in your path. Go out and cleave it to the saddle. And bring the saddle home!'

My sister-in-law might have thought me cruel—but I did it.

CHAP XXIII AND SOME OTHER CHAPS

I KNOW not how it was compassed, but that night Rupert of Glasgow was left bound and gagged against the door of the castle, and the night-bell pulled. And that night I was seated on the throne of the S'helpburgs. As I gazed at the Princess Flirtia, glowing in the characteristic beauty of the S'helpburgs, and admired her striking profile, I murmured softly and halt audibly: 'Her nose is as a tower that looketh toward Damascus.'

She looked puzzled, and knitted her pretty brows. 'Is that poetry?' she asked.

'No,' I said promptly. 'It's only part of a song of our great Ancestor.' As she blushed slightly, I playfully flung around her fair neck the jewelled collar of the Order of the

S'helpburgs—three golden spheres pendant, quartered from the arms of Lombardy—with the ancient Syric motto '*El Ess Dee*.'

She toyed with it a moment, and then said softly : 'You have changed, Rupert. Do ye no ken hoo ?'

I looked at her—as surprised at her dialect as at the imputation.

'You don't talk that way—as you did. And you don't say, "It *will* be twelve o'clock" when you mean "it *is* twelve o'clock," nor "I will be going out," when you mean "I *am*." And you didn't say, "Eh, sirs !" or "Eh, mon," to any of the Court—nor "Hoot awa !" nor any of those things. And,' she added with a divine little pout, 'you haven't told me I was "sonsie" or "bonnie" once.'

I could with difficulty restrain myself. Rage, indignation, and jealousy filled my heart almost to bursting. I understood it all—that rascally Scotchman had made the most of his time, and dared to get ahead of me ! I did not mind being taken for the King, but to

be confounded with this infernal descendant of a gamekeeper—was too much! Yet with a superhuman effort I remained calm—and even smiled.

'You are not well?' said the Princess earnestly. 'I thought you were taking too much of the Strasbourg pie at supper! And you are not going surely—so soon,' she added, as I rose.

'I must go at once?' I said. 'I have forgotten some important business at Bock.'

'Not boar hunting again?' she said poutingly.

'No, I'm hunting a red dear,' I said with that playful subtlety which would make her take it as a personal compliment, though I was only thinking of that impostor, and longing to get at him, as I bowed and withdrew.

In another hour I was before Black Michael's castle at Bock. These are lightning changes, I know—and the sovereignty of Trulyruralania *was* somewhat itinerant—but when a kingdom and a beautiful Princess

are at stake, what are you to do? Fritz had begged me to take him along, but I arranged that he should come later, and go up unostentatiously in the lift. I was going by way of the moat. I was to succour the King—but I fear my real object was to get at Rupert or Glasgow.

I had noticed the day before that a large outside drain pipe, decreed by the Bock County Council, ran from the moat to the third floor of the donjon keep. I surmised that the King was imprisoned on that floor. Examining the pipe closely I saw that it was really a pneumatic despatch tube, for secretly conveying letters and despatches from the castle through the moat beyond the castle walls. Its extraordinary size, however, gave me the horrible conviction that it was to be used to convey the dead body of the King to the moat. I grew cold with horror—but I was determined.

I crept up the pipe. As I expected, it opened funnel-wise into a room where the poor King was playing poker with Black Michael.

It took me but a moment to dash through the window into the room, push the King aside, gag and bind Black Michael, and lower him by a stout rope into the pipe he had destined for another. Having him in my power I lowered him until I heard his body splash in the water in the lower part of the pipe. Then I proceeded to draw him up again, intending to question him in regard to Rupert of Glasgow. But this was difficult, as his saturated clothing made him fit the smooth pipe closely. At last I had him partly up, when I was amazed at a rush of water from the pipe which flooded the room. I dropped him and pulled him up again with the same result. Then in a flash I saw it all. His body, acting like a piston in the pipe, had converted it into a powerful pump. Mad with joy, I rapidly lowered and pulled him up again and again, until the castle was flooded—and the moat completely drained! I had created the diversion I wished; the tenants of the castle were disorganized and bewildered in trying to escape from the deluge, and the moat was

accessible to my friends. Placing the poor King on a table to be out of the water, and tying up his head in my handkerchief to disguise him from Michael's guards, I drew my sword and plunged downstairs with the cataract in search of the miscreant Rupert. I reached the drawbridge, when I heard the sounds of tumult and was twice fired at : once, as I have since learned, by my friends, under the impression that I was the escaping Rupert of Glasgow, and once by Black Michael's myrmidons, under the belief that I was the King. I was struck by the fact that these resemblances were confusing and unfortunate ! At this moment, however, I caught sight of a kilted figure leaping from a lower window into the moat. Some instinct impelled me to follow it. It rapidly crossed the moat and plunged into the forest, with me in pursuit. I gained upon it ; suddenly it turned, and I found myself again confronted with *myself*—and apparently the King ! But that very resemblance made me recognise the Scotch pretender—

Rupert of Glasgow. Yet he would have been called a 'braw laddie,' and his handsome face showed a laughing good humour, even while he opposed me, claymore in hand.

'Bide a wee, Maister Rupert Razorbill,' he said lightly, lowering his sword, 'before we slit ane anither's weasands. I'm no claimin' any descent frae kings and I'm no acceptin' any auld wife's clavers against my women forbears, as ye are! I'm just paid gude honest siller by Black Michael for the using of ma face and figure—sic time as his Majesty is tae worse frae trink! And I'm commeesioned frae Michael to ask ye what price *ye* would take to join me in performing these duties—turn and turn aboot. Eh, laddie—but he would pay ye mair than that daft beggar, Spitz.'

Rage and disgust overpowered me. 'And *this* is my answer,' I said, rushing upon him.

I have said earlier in these pages that I was a 'strong' swordsman. In point of fact, I had carefully studied in the transpontine theatres that form of melodramatic mediæval sword-play

known as 'two up and two down.' To my disgust, however, this wretched Scotchman did not seem to understand it, but in a twinkling sent my sword flying over my head. Before I could recover it, he had mounted a horse ready saddled in the wood, and, shouting to me that he would take my 'compleements' to the Princess, galloped away. Even then I would have pursued him afoot, but, hearing shouts behind me, I turned as Spitz and Fritz rode up.

'Has the King escaped to Köhlslau?' asked Fritz, staring at me.

'No,' I said, 'but Rupert of Glasgow——'

'—— Rupert of Glasgow,' growled Spitz. 'We've settled him! He's gagged and bound and is now on his way to the frontier in a close carriage.'

'Rupert—on his way to the frontier?' I gasped.

'Yes. Two of my men found him, disguised with a handkerchief over his face, trying to escape from the castle. And while we were looking for the King, whom we supposed was

with you, they have sent the rascally Scotchman home.'

'Fool!' I gasped. 'Rupert of Glasgow has just left me! *You have deported your own King.*' And, overcome by my superhuman exertions, I sank unconscious to the ground.

When I came to, I found myself in a *wagon lit*, speeding beyond the Trulyruralania frontier. On my berth was lying a missive with the seal of the S'helpburgs. Tearing it open I recognised the handwriting of the Princess Flirtia.

My Dear Rupert,—Owing to the confusion that arises from there being so many of you, I have concluded to accept the hand of the Duke Michael. I may not become a Queen, but I shall bring rest to my country—and Michael assures me in his playful manner that 'three of a kind,' 'even of the same colour,' do not always win at poker. It will tranquillise you somewhat to know that the Lord Chancellor assures me that on examining the records of the dynasty he finds that my ancestor Rupert never left his

kingdom during his entire reign, and that consequently your ancestress has been grossly maligned. I am sending typewritten copies of this to Rupert of Glasgow and the King. Farewell.

FLIRTIA.

Once a year, at Christmas-tide, I receive a simple foreign hamper *via* Charing Cross—marked 'Return empty.' I take it in silence to my own room, and there, opening it, I find—unseen by any other eyes but my own—a modest *pâté de foie gras*—of the kind I ate with the Princess Flirtia. I take out the *pâté*, replace the label, and have the hamper reconveyed to Charing Cross.

THE STOLEN CIGAR CASE

BY A. CO--N D--LE

THE STOLEN CIGAR CASE

I FOUND Hemlock Jones in the old Brook Street lodgings, musing before the fire. With the freedom of an old friend I at once threw myself in my usual familiar attitude at his feet, and gently caressed his boot. I was induced to do this for two reasons : one that it enabled me to get a good look at his bent, concentrated face, and the other that it seemed to indicate my reverence for his superhuman insight. So absorbed was he even then, in tracking some mysterious clue, that he did not seem to notice me. But therein I was wrong—as I always was in my attempt to understand that powerful intellect.

'It is raining,' he said, without lifting his head.

'You have been out, then ?' I said quickly.

'No. But I see that your umbrella is wet, and that your overcoat has drops of water on it.'

I sat aghast at his penetration. After a pause he said carelessly, as if dismissing the subject: 'Besides, I hear the rain on the window. Listen.'

I listened. I could scarcely credit my ears, but there was the soft pattering of drops on the panes. It was evident there was no deceiving this man!

'Have you been busy lately?' I asked, changing the subject. 'What new problem—given up by Scotland Yard as inscrutable—has occupied that gigantic intellect?'

He drew back his foot slightly, and seemed to hesitate ere he returned it to its original position. Then he answered wearily: 'Mere trifles—nothing to speak of. The Prince Kupoli has been here to get my advice regarding the disappearance of certain rubies from the Kremlin; the Rajah of Pootibad, after vainly beheading his entire bodyguard, has been obliged to seek my assistance to recover a jewelled sword.

The Grand Duchess of Pretzel-Brauntswig is desirous of discovering where her husband was on the night of February 14; and, last night'—he lowered his voice slightly—'a lodger in this very house, meeting me on the stairs, wanted to know why they didn't answer his bell.'

I could not help smiling—until I saw a frown gathering on his inscrutable forehead.

'Pray remember,' he said coldly, 'that it was through such an apparently trivial question that I found out Why Paul Ferroll Killed His Wife, and What Happened to Jones!'

I became dumb at once. He paused for a moment, and then, suddenly changing back to his usual pitiless, analytical style, he said: 'When I say these are trifles, they are so in comparison to an affair that is now before me. A crime has been committed and, singularly enough, against myself. You start,' he said; 'you wonder who would have dared to attempt it. So did I; nevertheless, it has been done. *I* have been *robbed*!'

'*You* robbed! You, Hemlock Jones, the

Terror of Peculators!' I gasped in amazement, arising and gripping the table as I faced him.

'Yes! Listen. I would confess it to no other. But *you* who have followed my career, who know my methods; you, for whom I have partly lifted the veil that conceals my plans from ordinary humanity; you, who have for years rapturously accepted my confidences, passionately admired my inductions and inferences, placed yourself at my beck and call, become my slave, grovelled at my feet, given up your practice except those few unremunerative and rapidly decreasing patients to whom, in moments of abstraction over *my* problems, you have administered strychnine for quinine and arsenic for Epsom salts; you, who have sacrificed anything and everybody to me—*you* I make my confidant!'

I arose and embraced him warmly, yet he was already so engrossed in thought that at the same moment he mechanically placed his hand upon his watch chain as if to consult the time. 'Sit down,' he said. 'Have a cigar?'

'I have given up cigar smoking,' I said.

'Why?' he asked.

I hesitated, and perhaps coloured. I had really given it up because, with my diminished practice, it was too expensive. I could afford only a pipe. 'I prefer a pipe,' I said laughingly. 'But tell me of this robbery. What have you lost?'

He arose and, planting himself before the fire with his hands under his coat-tails, looked down upon me reflectively for a moment. 'Do you remember the cigar case presented to me by the Turkish Ambassador for discovering the missing favourite of the Grand Vizier in the fifth chorus girl at the Hilarity Theatre? It was that one. I mean the cigar case. It was incrusted with diamonds.'

'And the largest one had been supplanted by paste,' I said.

'Ah,' he said, with a reflective smile, 'you know that?'

'You told me yourself. I remember considering it a proof of your extraordinary

perception. But, by Jove, you don't mean to say you have lost it ?'

He was silent for a moment. 'No—it has been stolen, it is true—but I shall still find it. And by myself alone ! In your profession, my dear fellow, when a member is seriously ill, he does not prescribe for himself, but calls in a brother doctor. Therein we differ. I shall take this matter in my own hands.'

'And where could you find better ?' I said enthusiastically. 'I should say the cigar case is as good as recovered already.'

'I shall remind you of that again,' he said lightly. 'And now, to show you my confidence in your judgment, in spite of my determination to pursue this alone, I am willing to listen to any suggestions from you.'

He drew a memorandum book from his pocket and, with a grave smile, took up his pencil.

I could scarcely believe my senses. He, the great Hemlock Jones, accepting suggestions from a humble individual like myself ! I kissed

his hand reverently, and began in a joyous tone :

'First, I should advertise, offering a reward ; I should give the same intimation in hand-bills, distributed at the "pubs" and the pastry-cooks'. I should next visit the different pawnbrokers ; I should give notice at the police station. I should examine the servants. I should thoroughly search the house and my own pockets. I speak relatively,' I added, with a laugh. 'Of course I mean *your* own.'

He gravely made an entry of these details.

'Perhaps,' I added, 'you have already done this ?'

'Perhaps,' he returned enigmatically. 'Now, my dear friend,' he continued, putting the note-book in his pocket and rising, 'would you excuse me for a few moments ? Make yourself perfectly at home until I return ; there may be some things,' he added with a sweep of his hand toward his heterogeneously filled shelves, 'that may interest you and while away the

time. There are pipes and tobacco in that corner.'

Then nodding to me with the same inscrutable face he left the room. I was too well accustomed to his methods to think much of his unceremonious withdrawal, and made no doubt he was off to investigate some clue which had suddenly occurred to his active intelligence.

Left to myself I cast a cursory glance over his shelves. There were a number of small glass jars containing earthy substances labelled, 'Pavement and Road Sweepings,' from the principal thoroughfares and suburbs of London, with the sub-directions 'for identifying foot-tracks.' There were several other jars labelled, 'Fluff from Omnibus and Road Car Seats,' 'Cocoanut Fibre and Rope Strands from Mattings in Public Places,' 'Cigarette Stumps and Match Ends from Floor of Palace Theatre Row A, 1 to 50.' Everywhere were evidences of this wonderful man's system and perspicacity.

I was thus engaged when I heard the slight creaking of a door, and I looked up as a stranger entered. He was a rough-looking man with a shabby overcoat and a still more disreputable muffler around his throat and the lower part of his face. Considerably annoyed at his intrusion, I turned upon him rather sharply, when, with a mumbled, growling apology for mistaking the room, he shuffled out again and closed the door. I followed him quickly to the landing and saw that he disappeared down the stairs. With my mind full of the robbery, the incident made a singular impression upon me. I knew my friend's habit of hasty absences from his room in his moments of deep inspiration; it was only too probable that, with his powerful intellect and magnificent perceptive genius concentrated on one subject, he should be careless of his own belongings, and no doubt even forget to take the ordinary precaution of locking up his drawers. I tried one or two and found that I was right—although for some reason I was unable to open one to its fullest

extent. The handles were sticky, as if some one had opened them with dirty fingers. Knowing Hemlock's fastidious cleanliness, I resolved to inform him of this circumstance, but I forgot it, alas! until—but I am anticipating my story.

His absence was strangely prolonged. I at last seated myself by the fire, and lulled by warmth and the patter of the rain on the window, I fell asleep. I may have dreamt, for during my sleep I had a vague semi-consciousness as of hands being softly pressed on my pockets—no doubt induced by the story of the robbery. When I came fully to my senses, I found Hemlock Jones sitting on the other side of the hearth, his deeply concentrated gaze fixed on the fire.

'I found you so comfortably asleep that I could not bear to awaken you,' he said with a smile.

I rubbed my eyes. 'And what news?' I asked. 'How have you succeeded?'

'Better than I expected,' he said, 'and I

think,' he added, tapping his note-book, 'I owe much to *you*.'

Deeply gratified, I awaited more. But in vain. I ought to have remembered that in his moods Hemlock Jones was reticence itself. I told him simply of the strange intrusion, but he only laughed.

Later, when I arose to go, he looked at me playfully. 'If you were a married man,' he said, 'I would advise you not to go home until you had brushed your sleeve. There are a few short, brown sealskin hairs on the inner side of your forearm—just where they would have adhered if your arm had encircled a sealskin coat with some pressure!'

'For once you are at fault,' I said triumphantly; 'the hair is my own, as you will perceive; I have just had it cut at the hairdresser's, and no doubt this arm projected beyond the apron.'

He frowned slightly, yet, nevertheless, on my turning to go he embraced me warmly—a rare exhibition in that man of ice. He even

helped me on with my overcoat and pulled out and smoothed down the flaps of my pockets. He was particular, too, in fitting my arm in my overcoat sleeve, shaking the sleeve down from the armhole to the cuff with his deft fingers. 'Come again soon!' he said, clapping me on the back.

'At any and all times,' I said enthusiastically; 'I only ask ten minutes twice a day to eat a crust at my office, and four hours' sleep at night—and the rest of my time is devoted to you always—as you know.'

'It is indeed,' he said with his impenetrable smile.

Nevertheless, I did not find him at home when I next called. One afternoon, when nearing my own home, I met him in one of his favourite disguises—a long blue swallow-tailed coat, striped cotton trousers, large turn-over collar, blacked face and white hat, carrying a tambourine. Of course to others the disguise was perfect, although it was known to myself, and I passed him—according to an old under-

standing between us—without the slightest recognition, trusting to a later explanation. At another time, as I was making a professional visit to the wife of a publican at the East End, I saw him, in the disguise of a broken-down artisan, looking into the window of an adjacent pawnshop. I was delighted to see that he was evidently following my suggestions, and in my joy I ventured to tip him a wink ; it was abstractedly returned.

Two days later I received a note appointing a meeting at his lodgings that night. That meeting, alas ! was the one memorable occurrence of my life, and the last meeting I ever had with Hemlock Jones ! I will try to set it down calmly, though my pulses still throb with the recollection of it.

I found him standing before the fire, with that look upon his face which I had seen only once or twice in our acquaintance—a look which I may call an absolute concatenation of inductive and deductive ratiocination—from which all that was human, tender or sympathetic

was absolutely discharged. He was simply an icy, algebraic symbol! Indeed his whole being was concentrated to that extent that his clothes fitted loosely, and his head was absolutely so much reduced in size by his mental compression that his hat tipped back from his forehead and literally hung on his massive ears.

After I had entered he locked the doors, fastened the windows, and even placed a chair before the chimney. As I watched these significant precautions with absorbing interest, he suddenly drew a revolver and, presenting it to my temple, said in low, icy tones:

'Hand over that cigar case!'

Even in my bewilderment my reply was truthful, spontaneous and involuntary. 'I haven't got it,' I said.

He smiled bitterly, and threw down his revolver. 'I expected that reply! Then let me now confront you with something more awful, more deadly, more relentless and convincing than that mere lethal weapon—the damning, inductive and deductive proofs of

your guilt!' He drew from his pocket a roll of paper and a note-book.

'But surely,' I gasped, 'you are joking! You could not for a moment believe——'

'Silence! Sit down!' I obeyed.

'You have condemned yourself,' he went on pitilessly. 'Condemned yourself on my processes—processes familiar to you, applauded by you, accepted by you for years! We will go back to the time when you first saw the cigar case. Your expressions,' he said, in cold, deliberate tones, consulting his paper, 'were, "How beautiful! I wish it were mine." This was your first step in crime —and my first indication. From "I *wish* it were mine" to "I *will* have it mine," and the mere detail, "*How can* I make it mine," the advance was obvious. Silence! But, as in my methods it was necessary that there should be an overwhelming inducement to the crime, that unholy admiration of yours for the mere trinket itself was not enough. You are a smoker of cigars.'

'But,' I burst out passionately, 'I told you I had given up smoking cigars.'

'Fool!' he said coldly, 'that is the *second* time you have committed yourself. Of course you told me! What more natural than for you to blazon forth that prepared and unsolicited statement to *prevent* accusation. Yet, as I said before, even that wretched attempt to cover up your tracks was not enough. I still had to find that overwhelming, impelling motive necessary to affect a man like you. That motive I found in the strongest of all impulses—Love, I suppose you would call it,' he added bitterly—'that night you called! You had brought the most conclusive proofs of it on your sleeve.'

'But——' I almost screamed.

'Silence!' he thundered. 'I know what you would say. You would say that even if you had embraced some Young Person in a sealskin coat, what had that to do with the robbery? Let me tell you, then, that that sealskin coat represented the quality and

character of your fatal entanglement! You bartered your honour for it—that stolen cigar case was the purchaser of the sealskin coat!

'Silence! Having thoroughly established your motive, I now proceed to the commission of the crime itself. Ordinary people would have begun with that—with an attempt to discover the whereabouts of the missing object. These are not *my* methods.'

So overpowering was his penetration that, although I knew myself innocent, I licked my lips with avidity to hear the further details of this lucid exposition of my crime.

'You committed that theft the night I showed you the cigar case and after I had carelessly thrown it in that drawer. You were sitting in that chair and I had arisen to take something from that shelf. In that instant you secured your booty without rising. Silence! Do you remember when I helped you on with your overcoat the other night? I was particular about fitting your arm in. While doing so I measured your arm with a spring tape

measure, from the shoulder to the cuff. A later visit to your tailor confirmed that measurement. It proved to be *the exact distance between your chair and that drawer!*'

I sat stunned.

'The rest are mere corroborative details! You were again tampering with the drawer when I discovered you doing so! Do not start! The stranger that blundered into the room with a muffler on—was myself! More, I had placed a little soap on the drawer handles when I purposely left you alone. The soap was on your hand when I shook it at parting. I softly felt your pockets, when you were asleep, for further developments. I embraced you when you left—that I might feel if you had the cigar case or any other articles hidden on your body. This confirmed me in the belief that you had already disposed of it in the manner and for the purpose I have shown you. As I still believed you capable of remorse and confession, I twice allowed you to see I was on your track: once in the garb

of an itinerant negro minstrel, and the second time as a workman looking in the window of the pawnshop where you pledged your booty.'

'But,' I burst out, 'if you had asked the pawnbroker, you would have seen how unjust——'

'Fool!' he hissed, 'that was one of *your* suggestions—to search the pawnshops! Do you suppose I followed any of your suggestions—the suggestions of the thief? On the contrary, they told me what to avoid.'

'And I suppose,' I said bitterly, 'you have not even searched your drawer?'

'No,' he said calmly.

I was for the first time really vexed. I went to the nearest drawer and pulled it out sharply. It stuck as it had before, leaving a part of the drawer unopened. By working it, however, I discovered that it was impeded by some obstacle that had slipped to the upper part of the drawer, and held it firmly fast. Inserting my hand, I pulled out the impeding

object. It was the missing cigar case! I turned to him with a cry of joy.

But I was appalled at his expression. A look of contempt was now added to his acute, penetrating gaze. 'I have been mistaken,' he said slowly; 'I had not allowed for your weakness and cowardice! I thought too highly of you even in your guilt! But I see now why you tampered with that drawer the other night. By some inexplicable means—possibly another theft—you took the cigar case out of pawn and, like a whipped hound, restored it to me in this feeble, clumsy fashion. You thought to deceive me—Hemlock Jones!—more, you thought to destroy my infallibility. Go! I give you your liberty. I shall not summon the three policemen who wait in the adjoining room—but out of my sight forever!'

As I stood once more dazed and petrified, he took me firmly by the ear and led me into the hall, closing the door behind him. This reopened presently, wide enough to permit him

to thrust out my hat, overcoat, umbrella and overshoes, and then closed against me forever !

I never saw him again. I am bound to say, however, that thereafter my business increased, I recovered much of my old practice, and a few of my patients recovered also. I became rich. I had a brougham and a house in the West End. But I often wondered, pondering on that wonderful man's penetration and insight, if, in some lapse of consciousness, I had not really stolen his cigar case !

GOLLY AND THE CHRISTIAN
OR THE MINX AND THE MANXMAN

BY H-LL C--NE

GOLLY AND THE CHRISTIAN, OR THE MINX AND THE MANXMAN

BOOK I

Golly Coyle was the only grand-daughter of a vague and somewhat simple clergyman who existed, with an aunt, solely for Golly's epistolary purposes. There was, of course, intermediate ancestry—notably a dead mother who was French, and therefore responsible for any later naughtiness in Golly—but they have no purpose here. They lived in the Isle of Man. Golly knew a good deal of Man, for even at the age of twelve she was in love with John Gale—only son of Lord Gale who was connected with the Tempests. Gales, however, were frequent and remarkable along the coast, so that it was not singular that one day

she found John 'coming on' on a headland where she was sitting. His dog had 'pointed' her. 'It's exceedingly impolite to point to anything you want,' said Golly. Touched by this, and overcome by a strange emotion, John Gale turned away and went to Canada. Slight as the incident was, it showed that inborn chivalry to women, that desire for the Perfect Life, that intense eagerness to incarnate Christianity in modern society, which afterward distinguished him. Golly loved him! For all that, she still remained a 'tomboy' as she was—robbing orchards, mimicking tramps and policemen, buttering the stairs and the steps of houses, tying kettles to dogs' tails, and marching in a white jersey, with the curate's hat on, through the streets of the village. 'Gol dern my skin!' said the dear old clergyman, as he tried to emerge from a surplice which Golly had stitched together; 'what spirits the child *do* have!' Yet everybody loved her! And when John Gale returned from Canada, and looked into her big

blue eyes one day at church, small wonder that he immediately went off again to Paris and an extended Continental sojourn, with a serious leaning to theology! Golly bore his absence meekly but characteristically; got a boat, disported like a duck in the water, attempted to elope with a boy appropriately named Drake, but encountered a half gale at sea and a whole Gale in John on a yacht, who rescued them both. Convinced now that there was but one way to escape from his Fate—Golly!—John Gale took holy orders and at once started for London. As he stood on the deck of the steamer he heard an imbecile chuckle in his ear. It was the simple old clergyman: 'You are going to London to join the church, John; Golly is going there, too, as hospital nurse. There's a pair of you! He! he! Look after her, John, and protect her Manx simplicity.' Before John could recover himself, Golly was at his side executing the final steps of a 'cellar-door flap jig' to the light-hearted refrain:

'We are a simple family—we are—we are—we are!'

And even as her pure young voice arose above the screams of the departure whistle, she threw a double back-somersault on the quarter-deck, cleverly alighting on the spikes of the wheel before the delighted captain.

'Jingle my electric bells,' he said, looking at the bright young thing, 'but you're a regular Minx——-'

'I beg your pardon,' interrupted John Gale, with a quick flush.

'I mean a regular *Manx*,' said the captain, hurriedly.

A singular paleness crossed the deeply religious face of John. As the vessel rose on the waves, he passed his hand hurriedly, first across his brows and then over his high-buttoned clerical waistcoat—that visible sign of a devoted ascetic life! Then murmuring in his low, deep voice, 'Brandy, steward,' he disappeared below.

BOOK II

GLORIOUS as were Golly's spirits, exquisitely simple her worldly ignorance, and irresistible her powers of mimicry, strangely enough they were considered out of place in St. Barabbas' Hospital. A light-hearted disposition to mistake a blister for a poultice; that rare Manx conscientiousness which made her give double doses to the patients as a compensation when she had omitted to give them a single one, and the faculty of bursting into song at the bedside of a dying patient, produced some liveliness not unmixed with perplexity among the hospital staff. It is true, however, that her performance of clog-dancing during the night-watches drew a larger and more persistent attendance of students and young surgeons than ever was seen before. Yet everybody

loved her! Even her patients! 'If it amooses you, miss, to make me tyke the pills wot's meant for the lydy in the next ward, I ain't complyning,' said an East End newsboy. 'When ye tyke off the style of the doctor wot wisits me, miss, and imitates his wyes, Lawd! it does me as much good as his mixtures,' said a consumptive charwoman. Even thus, old and young basked in the radiant youth of Golly. She found time to write to her family:

'Dear old Pals! I'm here. J'y suis! bet your boots! While you're wondering what has become of the Bright Young Thing—the B. Y. T. is lookin' out of the winder of St. Barabbas Hospital—just taking in all of dear, roaring, dirty London in one gulp! Such a place—Lordy! I've been waiting three hours to see the crowd go by and they haven't gone yet! Such crowds, such busses—all green and blue, only a penny fare, and you can ride on top if you want to! Think of that, you dear old Manx people! But there—"the bell goes a ringing for Sarah!"—they're calling for

Nurse!" That's the worst of this job: they're always a dyin' just as you're getting interested in something else! Ta-ta!—Golly!'

Then her dear old grandfather wrote:

'I'm wondering where my diddleums, Golly, is! We all miss you so much, deary, though we don't miss so many little things as when you were here. My dear, conscientious, unselfish little girl! You don't say where John Gale is. Is he still protecting you—he-he!—you giddy, naughty thing! People wonder on the island why I let you go alone to London—they forget your dear mother was a Frenchwoman! If you see anything your dear old grandfather would like—send it on.—Granfer.'

Later, her aunt wrote:

'Have you seen the Queen yet, and does she wear her crown at breakfast? You might get over the area railing at Buckingham Palace—it would be nothing for a girl like you to do—and see if you can find out.'

To these letters Golly answered, in her own light-hearted way :

'Dear Grankins :—I haven't seen John much—but I think he's like the Private Secretary at the play—he "don't like London." Lordy ! there—I've let it out ! I've been to a theayter. Nurse Jinny Jones and me scrouged into the pit one night without paying—"pertendin'," as we were in uniform, we had come to take out a "Lydy" that had fainted. Such larks ! and such a glorious theayter. I'll tell you another time. Tell aunty the Queen's always out when I call. But that's nothing, everybody else is so affable and polite in London. Gentlemen—"real toffs," they call 'em—whom you don't know from Adam—think nothing of speaking to you in the street. Why Nurse Jinny says—but there another patient's going off who, by rights, oughter have died only to-morrow. "To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow," as that barn-stormer actor said. But they're always calling for that giddy young thing—your Golly.'

Meantime, John Gale, having abruptly left Golly at the door of St. Barabbas' Hospital, tactfully avoiding an unseemly altercation with the cab-driver regarding her exact fare, pursued his way thoughtfully to the residence of his uncle, the First Lord of the Admiralty. He found his Lordship in his bath-room. He was leaning over the bath-tub, which was half full of water, contemplating with some anxiety the model of a line-of-battle ship which was floating on it, bottom upward. 'I don't think it can be quite right—do you?' he said, nervously grasping his nephew's hand as he pointed to the capsized vessel; 'yet they always do it. Tell me!' he went on appealingly, 'tell me, as a professing Christian and a Perfect Man—is it quite right?'

'I should think, sir,' responded John Gale, with uncompromising truthfulness, 'that the average vessel of commerce is not built in that way.'

'Yet,' said the First Lord of the Admiralty, with a far-off look, 'they all do it! And they

don't steer! The larger they are and the more recent the model, the less they steer. Dear me—you ought to see 'em go round and round in that tub.' Then, apparently recalling the probable purpose of John's visit, he led the way into his dressing-room. 'So you are in London, dear boy. Is there any little thing you want? I have,' he continued, absently fumbling in the drawers of his dressing-table, 'a few curacies and a bishopric somewhere, but with these blessed models—I can't think where they are. Or what would you say to a nice chaplaincy in the navy, with a becoming uniform—on one of those thingummies?'—he pointed to the bath-room. 'Stay,' he continued, as he passed his hand over his perplexed brows, 'now I think of it—you're quite unorthodox! Dear me! that wouldn't do. You see, Drake'—he paused, as John Gale started: 'I mean Sir Francis Drake—once suspended his chaplain for unorthodoxy, according to Froude's book. These admirals are dreadfully strict Churchmen. No matter! Come again some other

time,' he added, gently pushing his nephew downstairs and into the street, 'and we'll see about it.'

With a sinking heart, John turned his steps toward Westminster. He would go and see Golly—perhaps he had not looked after her as he ought. Suddenly a remembered voice, in mimicking accents, fell upon his ear with the quotation, 'Do you know?' Then, in a hansom passing swiftly by him, Golly, in hospital dress with flying ribbons, appeared, sitting between Lord Brownstone Ewer and Francis Horatio Nelson Drake, completely grown up. And from behind floated the inexpressibly sad refrain, 'Hi tiddli hi!'

This is how it happened. One morning, Jinny Jones, another hospital nurse, had said to her, 'Have you any objection, dear, to seeing a friend of another gent, a friend of mine?'

'None in the least, dear,' said Golly. 'I want to see all that can be seen and do all that can be done in London, and know the glory

thereof. I only require that I shall be allowed to love John Gale whenever he permits it, which isn't often, and that I may be permitted to write simple letters to my doting relations at the rate of twelve pages a day giving an account—*my own* account—of my doings. There! Go on now! Bring on your bears.'

They had visited the chambers which Lord Brownstone and Drake occupied together, and in girlish innocence had put on the gentlemen's clothes and danced before them. Then they all went to the theatre, where Golly's delightful simplicity and childish ignorance of the world had charmed them. Everything to her was new, strange and thrilling. She even leaned from the carriage windows to see the 'wheels go round.' She was surprised at the number of people in the theatre, and insisted on knowing if it was church, because they all sat there in their best clothes so quietly. She believed that the play was real, and frequently, from a stage-box, interrupted the acting with explana-

tions. She informed the heroine of the design of the villain waiting at the wings. And when the aged mother of the heroine was dying of starvation in a hovel, and she threw a bag of bonbons on the stage with the vociferous declaration that 'Lord Brownstone had just given them to her—but—Lordy!—*she* didn't want them,' they were obliged to lead her away, closely followed by an usher and a policeman. 'To think,' she wrote to John Gale, 'that the audience only laughed and shouted and never offered to help! And yet look at the churches in London where they dare to preach the gospel!'

Fired by this simple letter, and alarmed by Golly's simplicity, John Gale went to his clerical chief, Archdeacon Luxury, and demanded permission to preach next Sunday. 'Certainly,' said the Archdeacon; 'you shall take my curate's place. I shall inform the congregation that you are the son of Lord Gale. They are very particular churchmen—all society people—and of course will be satis-

fied with the work of the Lord, especially,' he added, with a polite smile, 'when that work happens to be—the Lord Gale's son.' Accordingly, the next Sunday, John Gale occupied the pulpit of St. Swithin. But an unexpected event happened. His pent-up eagerness to denounce the present methods of Christianity—his fulness of utterance—defeated his purpose. He was overcome with a kind of pulpit fright. His ideas of time and place fled him. After beginning, 'Mr. Chairman, in rising to propose the toast of our worthy Archdeacon—Fellow-Manxmen—the present moment—er—er—the proudest in my er—life—Dearly beloved Golly—unaccustomed as I am to public speaking,' he abruptly delivered the benediction and sat down. The incident, however, provoked little attention. The congregation, accustomed to sleep through the sermon, awoke at the usual time and went home. Only a single Scotchwoman said to him in passing: 'Verra weel for a beginning, laddie. But give it hotter to 'em next time.' Discomfited and be-

wildered, he communed with himself gloomily. 'I can't marry Golly. I can't talk. I hate society. What's to be done? I have it! I'll go into a monastery.'

He went into a monastery in Bishopsgate Street, reached by a threepenny 'bus. He gave out vaguely that he had got into 'Something Good, in the City.' Society was satisfied. Only Golly suspected the truth. She wrote to her grandfather:

'I saw John Gale the other day with a crowd following him in the Strand. He had on only a kind of brown serge dressing-gown, tied around his waist by a rope, and a hood on his head. I think his poor "toe-toes" were in sandals, and I dare say his legs were cold, poor dear. However, if he calls *that* protection of Golly—*I* don't! I might be run off at any moment—for all he'd help. No matter! If this Court understands herself, and she thinks she do, Golly can take care of herself—you bet.'

Nevertheless, Golly lost her place at the hospital through her heroic defence of her friend Jinny Jones, who had been deceived by Lord Brownstone Ewer. 'You would drive that poor girl into the street,' she said furiously to the Chairman of the Board, throwing her cap and apron in their faces. 'You're a lot of rotten old hypocrites, and I'm glad to get shut of you.' Not content with that, she went to Drake and demanded that he should make his friend Lord Brownstone marry Jinny.

'Sorry—awfully sorry—my dear Golly, but he's engaged to a rich American girl who is to pay his debts ; but I'll see that he does something handsome for Jinny. And *you*, my child, what are *you* going to do without a situation ?' he added, with touching sympathy. 'You see, I've some vague idea of marrying you myself,' he concluded, meditatively.

'Thank you for nothing,' interrupted Golly, gaily, 'but I can take care of myself and follow out my mission like John Gale.'

'There's a pair of you, certainly,' said Drake, with a tinge of jealous bitterness.

'You bet it's "a pair" that will take your "two knaves"—you and your Lord Brownstone,' returned Golly, dropping a mock courtesy. 'Ta-ta—I'm going on the stage.'

BOOK III

She went first into a tobacconist's—and sold cigarettes. Sometimes she suffered from actual want—and ate fried fish. 'Do you know how nice fried fish tastes in London?—you on "the Oilan'?" she wrote gaily. 'I'm getting on splendidly; so's John Gale I suppose, though he's looking cadaverous from starving himself all round. Tell aunty I haven't seen the Queen yet, though after all I really believe she has not seen me.'

Then, after a severe struggle, she succeeded in getting on the stage as a song and dance girl. She sang melodiously and danced divinely, so remarkably that the ignorant public, knowing her to be a Manx girl, and vaguely associating her with the symbol of the Isle of Man, supposed she had three legs. She was the

success of the season—her cup of ambition was filled. It was slightly embittered by the news that her friend Jinny Jones had killed herself in the church at the wedding of her recreant lover and the American heiress. But the affair was scarcely alluded to by the Society papers—who were naturally shocked at the bad taste of the deceased. And even Golly forgot it all—on the stage.

BOOK IV

MEANWHILE John Gale, or Brother Boreas, as he was known in the monastery, was submitting—among other rigours—to an exceptionally severe winter in Bishopsgate Street, which seemed to have an arctic climate of its own, possibly induced by the 'freezing-out' process of certain stock companies in its vicinity. 'You are miserable, and eager to get out in the wicked world again, my son,' said the delightful old Superior, as he sat by the only fire, sipping a glass of mulled port, when John came in from shovelling snow outside. 'I therefore, merely to try you, shall make you gatekeeper. The keys of the monastery front door are under the door-mat in my cell, but I am a sound sleeper.' He smiled seraphically, and winked casually as he

sipped his port. 'We will call it, if you please —a penance.'

John threw himself in an agony of remorse and shame at the feet of the Superior. 'It isn't of myself I'm thinking,' he confessed wildly, 'but of that poor young man, Brother Bones, in the next cell to mine. He is a living skeleton, has got only one lung and an atrophied brain. A night out might do him good.'

The Father Superior frowned. 'Do you know who he is?'

'No.'

'His real name is Jones. Why do you start? You have heard it before?'

John had started, thinking of Jinny Jones, Golly's deserted and self-immolated friend.

'It is an uncommon name,' he stammered —'for a monastery, I mean.'

'He is or was an uncommon man!' said the Superior, gravely. 'But,' he added resignedly, 'we cannot pick and choose our company here. Most of us have done some-

thing and have our own reasons for this retreat. Brother Polygamus escaped here from the persecutions of his sixth wife. Even I,' continued the Superior with a gentle smile, putting his feet comfortably on the mantelpiece, 'have had my little fling, and the dear boys used to say—ahem !—but this is mere worldly vanity. You alone, my dear son,' he went on with slight severity, 'seem to be wanting in some criminality, or—shall I say ?—some appropriate besetting sin to qualify you for this holy retreat. An absolutely gratuitous and blameless idiocy appears to be your only peculiarity, and for this you must do penance. From this day henceforth, I make you door-keeper ! Go on with your shovelling at present, and shut the door behind you—there's a terrible draft in these corridors.'

For three days John Gale underwent an agony of doubt and determination, and it still snowed in Bishopsgate Street.

On the fourth evening he went to Brother Bones.

'Would you like to have an evening out?'

'I would,' said Brother Bones.

'What would you do?'

'I would go to see my remaining sister.' His left eyelid trembled slowly in his cadaverous face.

'But if you should hear she was ruined like the other? What would you do?'

A shudder passed over the man. 'I have not got my little knife,' he said vacantly.

True, he had not! The Brotherhood had no pockets—or rather only a corporate one, which belonged to the Superior. John Gale lifted his eyes in sublime exaltation. 'You shall go out,' he said with decision. 'Muffle up until you are well out of Bishopsgate Street, where it still snows.'

'But how did you get the keys?' said Brother Bones.

'From under the Father Superior's doormat.'

'But that was wrong, Brother.'

'The mat bore the inscription, "Salve," which you know in Latin means "Welcome,"' returned John Gale. 'It was logically a permission.'

The two men gazed at each other silently. A shudder passed over the two left eyelids of their wan spiritual faces.

'But I have no money,' said Brother Bones.

'Nor have I. But here is a 'bus ticket and a free pass to the Gaiety. You will probably find Golly somewhere about. Tell her,' he said in a hollow voice, 'that I'm getting on.'

'I will,' said Brother Bones, with a deep cough.

The gate opened and he disappeared in the falling snow. The bloodhound kept by the monastery—one of the real Bishopsgate breed—bayed twice, and licked its huge jaws in ghastly anticipation. 'I wonder,' said John Gale as he resumed his shovelling, 'if I have done exactly right? Candour compels me to admit that it is an open question.'

BOOK V

EARLY the next morning, Brother Bones was brought home by Policeman X, his hat crushed, his face haggard, his voice husky and unintelligible. He only said, vaguely, 'Washer-time?'

'It is,' said John Gale, timidly, in explanation to Policeman X, 'a case of spiritual exhaustion following a vigil.'

'That warn't her name,' said Policeman X, sternly. 'But don't let this 'ere 'appen again.'

John Gale turned to Brother Bones. 'Then you saw her—Golly?'

'No,' said Brother Bones.

'Why? What on earth have you been doing?'

'Dunno! Found myself in stashun—zis morning! Thashall!'

Then John Gale sought the Superior in an agony of remorse and confessed all. 'I am unfit to remain doorkeeper. Remove me,' he groaned bitterly.

The old man smiled gently. 'On the contrary, I should have given you the keys myself. Hereafter you can keep them. The ways of our Brotherhood are mysterious—indeed, you may think idiotic—but we are not responsible for them. It's all Brother Caine's doing—it's 'all Caine!'

BOOK VI

NEVERTHELESS, John Gale left the monastery. 'The Bishopsgate Street winter does not suit me,' he briefly explained to the Superior. 'I must go south or south-west.'

But he did neither. He saw Golly, who was living west. He upbraided her for going on the stage. She retorted: 'Whose life is the more artificial, yours or mine? It is true that we are both imperfectly clothed,' she added, glancing at a photograph of herself in a short skirt, 'and not always in our right mind —but you've caught nothing but a cold! Nevertheless, I love you and you love me.'

Then he begged her to go with him to the South Seas and take the place of Father Damien among the colony of Lepers. 'It is

a beautiful place, and inexpensive, for we shall live only a few weeks. What do you say, dearest? You know,' he added, with a faint, sad smile, glancing at another photograph of her—executing the high kick—'you're quite a leaper yourself.'

But that night she received an offer of a new engagement. She wrote to John Gale: 'The South Seas is rather an expensive trip to take simply to die. Couldn't we do it as cheaply at home? Or couldn't you prevail on your Father Superior to set up his monastery there? I'm afraid I'm not up to it. Why don't you try the old "Oilan" nearer home? There's lots of measles and diphtheria about there lately.'

When the heartbroken John Gale received this epistle, he also received a letter from his uncle, the First Lord of the Admiralty. 'I don't fancy this Damien whim of yours. If you're really in earnest about killing yourself, why not take a brief trial trip in one of our latest ironclads? It's just as risky, although—as we

are obliged to keep these things quiet in the Office —you will not of course get that publicity your noble soul craves.'

Abandoned by all in his noble purposes, John Gale took the first steamer to the Isle of Man.

BOOK VII

But he did not remain there long. Once back in that epistolary island, he wrote interminable letters to Golly. When they began to bore each other, he returned to London and entered the Salvation Army. Crowds flocked to hear him preach. He inveighed against Society and Wickedness as represented in his mind by Golly and her friends—and praised a perfect Christianity represented by himself and *his* friends. A panic of the same remarkable character as the Bishopsgate Street winter took possession of London. Old Moore's, Zadkiel's and Mother Shipton's prophecies were to be fulfilled at an early and fixed date with no postponement on account of weather. Suddenly, Society, John Drake, and Anti-christ generally,

combined by ousting him from his church, and turning it into a music-hall for Golly! Then John Gale took his last and sublime resolve. His duty as a perfect Christian was to kill Golly! His logic was at once inscrutable, perfect and—John Galish!

With this sublime and lofty purpose, he called upon Golly. The heroic girl saw his purpose in his eye—an eye at once black, murderous, and Christian-like. For an instant she thought it was better to succumb at once and thus end this remarkable attachment. Suddenly through this chaos of Spiritual, Religious, Ecstatic, Super-Egotistic whirl of confused thought, darted a gleam of Common, Ordinary Horse Sense! John Gale saw it illumine her blue eyes and trembled. God in Mercy! If it came to *that!*

'Sit down, John,' she said calmly. Then, in her sweet, clear voice, she said: 'Did it ever occur to you, dearest, that a more ridiculous, unconvincing, purposeless, insane, God-forsaken idiot than you never existed? That

you eclipse the wildest dreams of insanity? That you are a mental and moral "what-is-it"?'

'It has occurred to me,' he replied simply. 'I began life with vast asinine possibilities which fall to the lot of few men; yet I cannot say that I have carried even *them* to a logical conclusion! But *you*, love! *you*, darling! conceived in extravagance, born to impossibility, a challenge to credulity—a problem to the intellect, a "missing word" for all ages—are you aware of any one as utterly unsympathetic, unreal, and untrue to nature as you are, existing on the face of the earth, or in the waters under the earth?'

'You are right, dearest; there are none,' she returned with the same calm, level voice. 'It is true that I have at times tried to do something real and womanly, and not, you know, merely to complicate a—a'—her voice faltered—'theatrical situation—but I couldn't! Something impelled me otherwise. Now you know why I became an actress! But even

there I fail! *They* are allowed reasoning power off the stage—I have none at any time! I laugh in the wrong place—I do the unnecessary, extravagant thing. Endowed by some strange power with extraordinary attributes, I am supposed to make everybody love me, but I don't—I satisfy nobody; I convince none! I have no idea what will happen to me next. I am doomed to—I know not what.'

'And I,' he groaned bitterly, 'I, in some rare and lucid moments, have had a glimpse of this too. We are in the hands of some inscrutable but awful power. Tell me, Golly, tell me, darling, who is it?'

Again that gleam of Common or Ordinary Horse Sense came in her eye.

'I have found out who,' she whispered. 'I have found out who has created us—and made us as puppets in his hands.'

'Is it the Almighty?' he asked.

'No—it is,' she said, with a burst of real laughter—'it is—The 'All Caine!'

'What! our countryman the Manxman?

The only great Novelist? The beloved of Gladstone?' he gasped.

'Yes—and he intends to kill *you*—and we're only to be married at your death-bed!'

John Gale arose with a look of stern determination. 'I have suffered much and idiotically—but I draw a line at this. I shall kick!'

Golly clapped her hands joyfully. 'We will!'

'And we'll chuck him.'

'We will.'

They were choking with laughter.

'And go and get married in a natural, simple way like anybody else—and try—to do our duty—to God—to each other—and to our fellow-beings—and quit this—damned—nonsense—and in-fer-nal idiocy for ever!'

'Amen!'

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.—'In that supreme work of my life, "The Christian,"' said the

gifted novelist to a reporter in speaking of his methods, 'I had endowed the characters of Golly and John Gale with such superhuman vitality and absolute reality that—as is well known in the experience of great writers—they became thinking beings, and actually criticised my work, and even *interfered* and *rebelled* to the point of altering my climax and the end!' The present edition gives that ending, which of course is the only real one.

THE
ADVENTURES OF JOHN LONGBOWE,
YEOMAN

BEING A MODERN-ANTIQUE, REALISTIC ROMANCE

(COMPILED FROM SEVERAL EMINENT SOURCES)

THE ADVENTURES OF JOHN LONGBOWE, YEOMAN

It seemeth but fair that I, John Longbowe, should set down this account of such hap and adventure as hath befallen me, without flourish, vapouring, or cozening of speech, but as becometh one who, not being a ready writer, goeth straight to the matter in hand in few words. So, though I offend some, I shall yet convince all—the which lieth closer to my purpose. Thus, it was in the year 1560, or 1650, or mayhap 1710—for my memory is not what it hath been and I ever cared little for monkish calendars or such dry-as-dust matter, being active as becometh one who hath to make his way in the world—yet I wot well it was after the Great Plague, which I have great

cause to remember, lying at my cozen's in Wardour Street, London, in that lamentable year, eating of gilly flowers, sulphur, hartes tongue and many stynking herbes; touching neither man nor mayd, save with a great tongs steept in pitch; wearing a fine maske of silk with a mouth piece of aromatic stuff—by reason of which acts of hardihood and courage I was miraculously preserved. This much I shall say as to the time of these happenings, and no more. I am a plain, blunt man—mayhap rude of speech should occasion warrant—so let them who require the exactness of a scrivener or a pedagogue go elsewhere for their entertainment and be hanged to them!

Howbeit, though no scholar, I am not one of those who misuse the English speech, and, being foolishly led by the hasty custom of scriveners and printers to write the letters 'T' and 'H' joined together, which resembleth a 'Y,' do incontinently jump to the conclusion the THE is pronounced 'Ye'—the like of which I never heard in all England.

And though this be little toward those great enterprises and happenings I shall presently shew, I set it down for the behoof of such malapert wights as must needs gird at a man of spirit and action—and yet, in sooth, know not their own letters.

So to my tale. There was a great frost when my Lord bade me follow him to the water gate near our lodgings in the Strand. When we reached it we were amazed to see that the Thames was frozen over and many citizens disporting themselves on the ice—the like of which no man had seen before. There were fires built thereon and many ships and barges were stuck hard and fast, and my Lord thought it vastly pretty that the people were walking under their bows and cabbin windows and climbing of their sides like mermen, but I, being a plain, blunt man, had no joy in such idlenesse, deeming it better that in these times of pith and enterprise they should be more seemly employed. My Lord, because of one or two misadventures by reason of the slip-

periness of the ice, was fain to go by London Bridge, which we did ; my Lord as suited his humour ruffling the staid citizens as he passed or peering under the hoods of their wives and daughters—as became a young gallant of the time. I, being a plain, blunt man, assisted in no such folly, but contented myself, when they complayned to me, with damning their souls for greasy interfering varlets. For I shall now make no scruple in declaring that my Lord was the most noble Earl of Southampton, being withheld from so saying before through very plainness and bluntness—desiring as a simple yeoman to make no boast of serving a man of so high quality.

We fared on over Bankside to the Globe playhouse, where my Lord bade me dismount and deliver a secret message to the chief player —which message was, 'had he diligently perused and examined that he wot of, and what said he thereof?' Which I did. Thereupon he that was called the chief player did incontinently proceed to load mine arms and wallet

with many and divers rolls of manuscripts in my Lord's own hand, and bade me say unto him that there was a great frost over London, but that if he were to perform those plays and masques publickly, there would be a greater frost there—to wit, in the Globe playhouse. This I did deliver with the Manuscripts to my Lord—who changed countenance mightily at the sight of them, but could make nought of the message. At which the lad who held the horses before the playhouse—one Will Shakespeare—split with laughter. Whereat my Lord cursed him for a deer-stealing, coney-catching Warwickshire lout, and cuffed him soundly. I wot there will be those who remember that this Will Shakespeare afterwards became a player and did write plays—which were acceptable even to the Queen's Majesty's self—and I set this down not from vanity to shew I have held converse with such, nor to give a seemingness and colour to my story, but to shew what ill-judged, misinformed knaves were they who did afterwards attribute friendship between my Lord and this Will Shake-

speare even to the saying that he made sonnets to my Lord. Howbeit, my Lord was exceeding wroth, and I, to beguile him, did propose that we should leave our horses and cargoes of manuscript behind and cross on the ice afoot, which conceit pleased him mightily. In sooth it chanced well with what followed, for hardly were we on the river when we saw a great crowd coming from Westminster, before a caravan of strange animals and savages in maskes, capering and capricolling, dragging after them divers sledges quaintly fashioned like swannes in which were ladies attired as fairies and goddesses and such like heathen and wanton trumpery, which I, as a plain, blunt man, would have fallen to cursing, had not my Lord himself damned me under his breath to hold my peace, for that he had recognised my Lord of Leicester's colours and that he made no doubt they were of the Court. As forsooth this did presently appear ; also that one of the ladies was her Gracious Majesty's self —masked to the general eye—the better to

enjoy these miscalled festivities. I say miscalled, for, though a loyal subject of her Majesty and one who hath borne arms at Tilbury Fort in defence of her Majesty, it inflamed my choler, as a plain and blunt man, that her Mightiness should so degrade her dignity. Howbeit, as a man who hath his way to make in the world, I kept mine eyes well upon the anticks of the Great, while my Lord joined the group of maskers and their follies. I recognised her Majesty's presence by her discourse in three languages to as many Ambassadors that were present—though I marked well that she had not forgotten her own tongue, calling one of her ladies 'a sluttish wench,' nor her English spirit in cuffing my Lord of Essex's ears for some indecorum—which, as a plain man myself, curt in speech and action, did rejoice me greatly. But I must relate one feat, the like of which I never saw in England before or since. There was a dance of the maskers and in the midst of it her Majesty asked the Ambassador from Spayne if he had seen the latest

French dance. He replied that he had not. Whereupon Her Most Excellent Majesty skipt back a pace and forward a pace, and lifting her hoop, delivered a kick at his Excellency's hat which sent it flying the space of a good English ell above his head! Howbeit so great was the acclamation that her Majesty was graciously moved to repeat it to my Lord of Leicester, but, tripping back, her high heels caught in her farthingale, and she would have fallen on the ice, but for that my Lord, with exceeding swiftness and dexterity, whisked his cloak from his shoulder, spreading it under her, and so received her body in its folds on the ice, without himself touching her Majesty's person. Her Majesty was greatly pleased at this, and bade my Lord buy another cloak at her cost, though it swallowed an estate; but my Lord replyed, after the lying fashion of the time, that it was honour enough for him to be permitted to keep it after 'it had received her Royal person.' I know that this hap hath been partly related of another person

—the shipman Raleigh—but I tell such as deny me that they lie in their teeth, for I, John Longbowe, have cause—miserable cause enough, I warrant—to remember it, and my Lord can bear me out! For, spite of his fair speeches, when he was quit of the Royal presence, he threw me his wet and bedraggled cloak and bade me change it with him for mine own, which was dry and warm. And it was this simple act which wrought the lamentable and cruel deed of which I was the victim, for, as I followed my Lord, thus apparelled, across the ice, I was suddenly set upon and seized, a choke-pear clapt into my mouth so that I could not cry aloud, mine eyes bandaged, mine elbows pinioned at my side in that fatall cloak like to a trussed fowl, and so I was carried to where the ice was broken, and thrust into a boat. Thence I was conveyed in the same rude sort to a ship, dragged up her smooth, wet side, and clapt under hatches. Here I lay helpless as in a swoon. When I came to, it was with a great trampling on the decks above and the washing

of waves below, and I made that the ship was moving—but where I knew not. After a little space the hatch was lifted from where I lay, the choke-pear taken from my mouth—but not the bandage from mine eyes, so I could see nought around me. But I heard a strange voice say: 'What coil is this? This is my Lord's cloak in sooth, but not my Lord that lieth in it! Who is this fellow?' At which I did naturally discover the great misprise of those varlets who had taken me for my dear Lord, whom I now damned in my heart for changing of the cloaks! Howbeit, when I had fetched my breath with difficulty, being well nigh spent by reason of the gag, I replyed that I was John Longbowe, my Lord's true yeoman, as good a man as any, as they should presently discover when they set me ashore. That I knew—— 'Softly friend,' said the Voice, 'thou knowest too much for the good of England and too little for thine own needs. Thou shalt be sent where thou mayest forget the one and improve thy knowledge of the other.' Then as if turning to

those about him, for I could not see by reason of the blindfold, he next said: 'Take him on your voyage and see that he escape not till ye are quit of England.' And with that they clapt to the hatch again, and I heard him cast off from the ship's side. There was I, John Longbowe, an English yeoman—I, who but that day had held converse with Will Shakespeare and been cognizant of the revels of Her Most Christian Majesty even to the spying of her garter!—I was kidnapped at the age of forty-five or thereabout—for I will not be certain of the year—and forced to sea for that my Lord of Southampton had provoked the jealousie and envy of divers other great nobles.

CHAPTERS I TO XX

I AM FORCED TO SEA AND TO BECOME A PIRATE! I SUFFER LAMENTABLY FROM SICKNESS BY REASON OF THE BIGNESSE OF THE WAVES. I COMMIT MANY CRUELTIES AND BLOODSHED. BUT BY THE DIVINE INTERCESSION I EVENTUALLY THROW THE WICKED CAPTAIN OVERBOARD AND AM ELECTED IN HIS STEAD. I DISCOVER AN ISLAND OF TREASURE, OBTAIN POSSESSION THEREOF BY A TRICKE, AND PUT THE NATIVES TO THE SWORD

I MARVEL much at those who deem it necessary in the setting down of their adventures to gloze over the whiles between with much matter of the country, the peoples and even their own foolish reflections thereon, hoping in this way to cozen the reader with a belief in their own truthfulness and encrease the extrava-

gance of their deeds. I, being a plain, blunt man, shall simply say for myself that for many days after being taken from the bilboes and made free of the deck, I was grievously distempered by reason of the waves and so collapsed in the bowels that I could neither eat, stand nor lie. Being thus in great fear of death, from which I was miraculously preserved, I out of sheer gratitude to my Maker did incontinently make oath and sign articles to be one of the crew—which were buccaneers. I did this the more readily as we were to attack the ships of Spayne only, and through there being no state of Warre at that time between England and that country, it was wisely conceived that this conduct would provoke it, and we should thus be forearmed, as became a juste man in his quarrel. For this we had the precious example of many great Captains. We did therefore heave to and burn many ships—the quality of those engagements I do not set forth, not having a seaman's use of ship speech and despising, as a plain, blunt man, those who misuse it, having it not.

But this I do know, that, having some conceit of a shipman's ways and of pirates, I did conceive at this time a pretty song for my comradoes, whereof the words ran thus :—

Yo ho ! when the Dog Watch bayeth loud
In the light of a mid-sea moon !
And the Dead Eyes glare in the stiffening Shroud,
For that is the Pirate's noon !
When the Night Mayres sit on the Dead Man's Chest
Where no manne's breath may come—
Then hey ! for a bottle of Rum ! Rum ! Rum !
And a passage to Kingdom come !

I take no credit to myself for the same, except so far as it may shew a touch of my Lord of Southampton's manner—we being intimate—but this I know, that it was much acclaimed by the crew. Indeed they, observing that the Captain was of a cruel nature, would fain kill him and put me in his stead, but I, objecting to the shedding of precious blood in such behoof, did prevent such a lamentable and inhuman action by stealthily throwing him by night from his cabbin window into the sea—where, owing to the inconceivable distance of the ship from shore, he was presently drowned.

Which untoward fate had a great effect upon my fortunes, since, burthening myself with his goods and effects, I found in his chest a printed proclamation from an aged and infirm clergyman in the West of England covenanting that, for the sum of two crowns, he would send to whoso offered, the chart of an island of great treasure in the Spanish Main, whereof he had had confession from the lips of a dying parishioner, and the amount gained thereby he would use for the restoration of his parish church. Now I, reading this, was struck by a great remorse and admiration for our late Captain, for that it would seem that he was, like myself, a staunch upholder of the Protestant Faith and the Church thereof, as did appear by his possession of the chart, for which he had no doubt paid the two good crowns. As an act of penance I resolved upon finding the same island by the aid of the chart, and to that purpose sailed East many days and South, and North, and West as many other days—the manner whereof and the latitude and longitude

of which I shall not burden the reader with, holding it, as a plain, blunt man, mere padding and impertinence to fill out my narrative, which helpeth not the general reader. So, I say, when we sighted the Island, which seemed to be swarming with savages, I ordered the masts to be stripped, save but for a single sail which hung sadly and distractedly, and otherwise put the ship into the likeness of a forlorn wreck, clapping the men, save one or two, under hatches. This I did to prevent the shedding of precious blood, knowing full well that the ignorant savages, believing the ship in sore distress, would swim off to her with provisions and fruit, bearing no arms. Which they did, while we, as fast as they clomb the sides, despatched them at leisure, without unseemly outcry or alarms. Having thus disposed of the most adventurous, we landed and took possession of the island, finding thereon many kegs of carbuncles and rubies and pieces of eight—the treasure store of those lawless pirates who infest the seas, having no colour of war or

teaching of civilisation to atone for their horrid deeds.

I discovered also, by an omission in the chart, that this was not the Island wot of by the good and aged Devonshire divine—and so we eased our consciences of accounting for the treasure to him. We then sailed away, arriving after many years' absence at the Port of Bristol in Merrie England, where I took leave of the 'Jolly Roger,' that being the name of my ship —it was a strange conceit of seamen in after years ever to call the device of my *flag*—to wit, a skull and bones made in the sign of a Cross—by the *name* my ship bore, and if I have only corrected the misuse of history by lying knaves, I shall be content with this writing. But alas! such are the uncertainties of time; I found my good Lord of Southampton dead and most of his friends beheaded, and the blessed King James of Scotland—if I mistake not, for these also be the uncertainties of time—on the throne. In due time I married Mistress Marian Straitways. I might have

told more of trifling, and how she fared, poor wench! in mine absence, even to the following of me in another ship, in a shipboy's disguise, and how I rescued her from a scheming Pagan villain; but, as a plain, blunt man, I am no hand at the weaving of puling love tales and such trifling diversions for lovesick mayds and their puny gallants—having only consideration for men and their deeds which I have here set down bluntly and even at mine advanced years am ready to maintain with the hand that set it down.

DAN'L BOREM

BY E. N---S- W--T---T

DAN'L BOREM

I

DAN'L BOREM poured half of his second cup of tea abstractedly into his lap.

'Guess you've got suthin' on yer mind, Dan'l,' said his sister.

'Mor'n likely I've got suthin' on my pants,' returned Dan'l with that exquisitely dry, though somewhat protracted humour which at once thrilled and bored his acquaintances. 'But —speakin' o' that hoss trade——'

'For goodness sake, don't!' interrupted his sister wearily; 'yer allus doin' it. Jest tell me about that young man—the new clerk ye think o' gettin'.'

'Well, I telegraphed him to come over, arter I got this letter from him,' he returned, handing her a letter. 'Read it out loud.'

But his sister, having an experienced horror of prolixity, glanced over it. 'Far as I kin see he takes mor'n two hundred words to say you've got to take him on trust, and sez it suthin' in a style betwixt a business circular and them Polite Letter Writers. I thought you allowed he was a tony feller.'

'Ef he does not brag much, ye see, I kin offer him small wages,' said Dan'l with a wink. 'It's kinder takin' him at his own figger.'

'And *that* mightn't pay! But ye don't think o' bringin' him *here*—in this house? 'Cept you're thinkin' o' tellin' him that yarn o' yours about the hoss trade to beguile the winter evenings. I told ye ye'd hev to pay yet to get folks to listen to it.'

'Wrong agin—ez you'll see! Wot ef I get a hundred thousand folks to pay me for tellin' it? But, speakin' o' this young feller, I calkilated to send him to the Turkey Buzzard Hotel'; and he looked at his sister with a shrewd yet humorous smile.

'What!' said his sister in alarm. 'The

Turkey Buzzard! Why, he'll be starved or pizoned! He won't stay there a week.'

'Ef he's pizoned to death he won't be able to demand any wages; ef he leaves because he can't stand it—it's proof positive he couldn't stand me. Ef he's only starved and made weak and miserable he'll be easy to make terms with. It may seem hard what I'm sayin', but what seems hard on the other feller always comes mighty easy to you. The thing is *not* to be the "other feller." Ye ain't listenin'. Yet these remarks is shrewd and humorous, and hez bin thought so by literary fellers.'

'H'm!' said his sister. 'What's that ye was jest sayin' about folks bein' willin' to pay ye for tellin' that hoss trade yarn o' yours?'

'Thet's only what one o' them smart New York publishers allowed it was worth arter hearin' me tell it,' said Dan'l dryly.

'Go way! You or him must be crazy. Why it ain't ez good as that story 'bout a man who had a balky hoss that could be made to go only by buildin' a fire under him, and arter the

man sells that hoss and the secret, and the man wot bought him tries it on, the blamed hoss lies down over the fire, and puts it out.'

'I've allus allowed that the story ye hev to tell yourself is a blamed sight funnier than the one ye're listenin' to,' said Dan'l. 'Put that down among my sayin's, will ye?'

'But your story was never anythin' more than one o' them snippy things ye see in the papers—drored out to no end by you. It's only one o' them funny paragraphs ye kin read in a minit in the papers that takes *you* an hour to tell.'

To her surprise Dan'l only looked at his sister with complacency.

'That,' he said, 'is jest what the New York publisher sez. "The 'Merrikan people," sez he, "is ashamed o' bein' short and peart and funny; it lacks dignity," sez he; "it looks funny," sez he, "but it ain't deep-seated nash'nul literature," sez he. "Them snips o' funny stories and short dialogues in the comic papers—they make ye laff," sez he, "but laffin' isn't no sign o' deep

morril purpose," sez he, "and it ain't genteel and refined. Abraham Linkin with his pat anecdotes ruined our standin' with dignified nashuns," sez he. "We cultivated publishers is sick o' hearin' furrin' nashuns roarin' over funny 'Merrikan stories; we're goin' to show 'em that, even ef we haven't classes and titles and sich, we kin be dull. We're workin' the historical racket for all that it's worth; ef we can't go back mor'n a hundred years or so, we kin rake in a Lord and a Lady when we do, and we're gettin' in some ole-fashioned spellin' and 'methinkses' and 'peradventures.' We're doin' the religious bizness ez slick ez Robert Elsmere, and we find lots o' soul in folks and heaps o' quaint morril characters," sez he.'

'Sakes alive, Dan'l!' broke in his sister; 'what's all that got to do with your yarn 'bout the hoss trade?'

'Everythin',' returned Dan'l. '"For," sez he, "Mr. Borem," sez he, "you're a quaint morril character. You've got protracted humor," sez he. "You've bin an hour tellin' that yarn

o' yours! Ef ye could spin it out to fill two chapters of a book—yer fortune's made! For you'll show that a successful hoss trade involves the highest nash'nul characteristics. That what common folk calls 'selfishness,' 'revenge,' 'mean lyin',' and low-down money grubbin' ambishun is really 'quaintness,' and will go in double harness with the bizness of a Christian banker," sez he.'

'Created goodness, Dan'l! You're designin' ter——'

Dan'l Borem rose, coughed, expectorated carefully at the usual spot in the fender, his general custom of indicating the conclusion of a subject or an interview, and said dryly: 'I'm thar!'

II

To return to the writer of the letter whose career was momentarily cut off by the episode of the horse trade (who, if he had previously received a letter written by somebody else would have been an entirely different person and not in this novel at all): John Lummox—known to his family as 'the perfect Lummox'—had been two years in college, but thought it rather fine of himself—a habit of thought in which he frequently indulged—to become a clerk, but finally got tired of it, and to his father's relief went to Europe for a couple of years, returning with some knowledge of French and German, and the cutting end of a German student's blunted duelling sword. Having, as he felt, thus equipped himself for the hero of an American 'Good Society' novel, he went on

board a 'liner,' where there would naturally be susceptible young ladies. One he thought he recognised as a girl with whom he used to play 'forfeits' in the vulgar past of his boyhood. She sat at his table, accompanied by another lady whose husband seemed to be a confirmed dyspeptic. His remarks struck Lummox as peculiar.

'Shall I begin dinner with pudding and cheese or take the ordinary soup first? I quite forget which I did last night,' he said anxiously to his wife.

But Mrs. Starling hesitated.

'Tell me, Mary,' he said, appealing to Miss Bike, the young lady.

'I should begin with the pudding,' said Miss Bike decisively, 'and between that and the arrival of the cheese you can make up your mind, and then, if you think better, go back to the soup.'

'Thank you so much. Now, as to drink? Shall I take the Friedrichshalle first or the Benedictine? You know the doctor insists

upon the Friedrichshalle—but I don't think I did well to mix them as I did yesterday. Or shall I take simply milk and beer ?'

'I should say simplicity was best. Besides, you can always fill up with champagne later.'

How splendidly this clear-headed, clear-eyed girl dominated the man ! Lummox felt that *really* he might renew her acquaintance ! He did so.

'I remembered you,' she said. 'You've not changed a bit since you were eight years old.'

John, wishing to change the subject, said that he thought Mr. Starling seemed an uncertain man.

'Very ! He's even now in his state-room sitting in his pyjamas with a rubber shoe on one foot and a pump on the other, wondering whether he ought to put on golf knickerbockers with a dressing-gown and straw hat before he comes on deck. He has already put on and taken off about twenty suits.'

'He certainly is very trying,' returned

Lummox. He paused and coloured deeply. 'I beg,' he stammered, 'I hope—you don't think me guilty of a pun! When I said "trying" I referred entirely to the effect on your sensitiveness of these tentative attempts toward clothing himself.'

'I should never accuse *you* of levity, Mr. Lummox,' said the young lady, gazing thoughtfully upon his calm but somewhat heavy features; 'never.'

Yet he would have liked to reclaim himself by a show of lightness. He was leaning on the rail looking at the sea. The scene was beautiful.

'I suppose,' he said, rolling with the sea and his early studies of Doctor Johnson, 'that one would in the more superior manner show his appreciation of all this by refraining from the obvious comment which must needs be recognised as comparatively commonplace and vulgar; but really this is so superb that I must express some of my emotion even at the risk of lowering your opinion of my good taste,

provided, of course, that you have any opinion on the one hand or any good taste on the other.'

'Without that undue depreciation of one's self which must ever be a sign of self-conscious demerit,' said the young girl lightly, 'I may say that I am not generally good at Johnsonese; but it may relieve your mind to know that had you kept silence one instant longer, I should have taken the risk of lowering your opinion of my taste, provided, of course, that you have one to lower and are capable of that exertion—if such indeed it may be termed—by remarking that this is perfectly magnificent.'

'Do you think,' he said gloomily, still leaning on the rail, 'that we can keep this kind of thing up—perhaps I should say down—much longer? For myself, I am feeling far from well; it may have been the lobster—or that last sentence—but——'

They were both silent. 'Yet,' she said, after a pause, 'you can at least take Mr. Starling and his dyspepsia off my hands. You might be equal to that exertion.'

'I suppose that by this time I ought to be doing something for somebody?' he said thoughtfully. 'Yes, I will.'

That evening after dinner he took Mr. Starling into the smoking-room and card-room. They had something hot. At 4 A.M., with the assistance of the steward, he projected Mr. Starling into Mrs. Starling's state-room—delicately withdrawing to evade the lady's thanks. At breakfast he saw Miss Bike. 'Thank you so much,' she said; 'Mrs. Starling found Starling greatly improved. He himself admitted he was "never berrer" and, far from worrying about what night-clothes he should wear, went to bed *as he was*—even to his hat. Mrs. Starling calls you "her preserver," and Mr. Starling distinctly stated that you were a "jolly-good-fler."'

'And you?' asked John Lummox.

'In your present condition of abnormal self-consciousness and apperceptive egotism, I really shouldn't like to say.'

When the voyage was ended Mr. Lummox

went to see Mary Bike at her house, and his father—whom he had not seen for ten years—at *his* house. With a refined absence of natural affection he contented himself with inquiring of the servants as to his father's habits, and if he still wore dress clothes at dinner. The information thus elicited forced him to the conclusion that the old gentleman's circumstances were reduced, and that it was possible that he, John Lummox, might be actually compelled to earn his own living. He communicated that suspicion to his father at dinner, and over the last bottle of 'Mouton,' a circumstance which also had determined him in his resolution. 'You might,' said his father thoughtfully, 'offer yourself to some rising American novelist as a study for the new hero—one absolutely without ambition, capacity or energy; willing, however, to be whatever the novelist chooses to make him, so long as he hasn't to choose for himself. If your inordinate self-consciousness is still in your way, I could give him a few points about you, myself.'

'I had thought,' said John, hesitatingly, 'of going into your office and becoming your partner in the business. You could always look after me, you know.'

A shudder passed over the old man. Then he tremblingly muttered to himself:

'Thank heaven! There is one way it may still be averted!' Retiring to his room he calmly committed suicide, thoughtfully leaving the empty poison bottle in the fender.

And this is how John Lummox came to offer himself as a clerk to Dan'l Borem. The ways of Providence are indeed strange, yet those of the novelist are only occasionally novel.

III

JOHN K. LUMMOX lived for a week at the Turkey Buzzard Hotel exclusively on doughnuts and innuendos. He was informed by Mr. Borem's clerk—whose place he was to fill—that he wouldn't be able to stand it, and thus received the character of his employer from his last employee.

'I suppose,' said Dan'l Borem chuckling, 'that he said I was a old skinflint, good only at a hoss trade, uneddicated, ignorant and unable to keep accounts, and an oppressor o' the widder and orphan. Allowed that my cute sayin's was a kind o' ten-cent parody o' them proverbs in Poor Richard's Almanack!'

'Omitting a few expletives, he certainly did,' returned Lummox with great delicacy.

'He allowed to me,' said Dan'l thought-

fully, 'that *you* was a poor critter that hadn't a single reason to show for livin' : that the fool-killer had bin shadderin' you from your birth, and that you hadn't paid a cent profit on your father's original investment in ye, nor on the assessments he'd paid on ye ever since. He seems to be a cute feller arter all, and I'm rather sorry he's leavin'.'

'I am quite willing to abandon my position in his favour, now,' said Lummox with alacrity.

'No,' said Dan'l, rubbing his chin argumentatively ; 'the only way for us to do is to circumvent him like in a hoss trade—with suthin' unexpected. When he thinks you're goin' to sleep in the shafts you'll run away ; and when he thinks I'm vicious I'll let a woman or a child drive me.'

IV

'Well, Dan'l, how's that new clerk o' yours gettin' on?' said Mrs. Bigsby a week later.

'Purty fine! He's good at accounts and hez got to know the Bank's customers by this time. But I allus reckoned he'd get stuck with some o' them counterfeit notes—and he hez! Ye see he ain't accustomed to look at a five or a ten dollar note as sharp as some men—and he's already taken in two tens and a five counterfeits.'

'Gracious!' said Mrs. Bigsby. 'What did the poor feller do?'

'Oh, he ups and tells me, all right, after he discovered it. And sez he: "I've charged my account with 'em," sez he, "so the Bank won't lose it."'

'Why, Dan'l,' said Mrs. Bigsby, 'ye didn't let that poor feller——'

'You hol' on!' said her brother; 'business is business—but I sez to him: "Ye oughter put it down to Profit and Loss account. Or perhaps we'll have a chance o' gettin' rid o' them—not in Noo York, where folks is sharp, but here in the country, and then ye kin credit yourself with the amount arter you've got rid o' them."'

'Laws! I'm sorry ye did that, Dan'l,' said Mrs. Bigsby.

'With that he riz up,' continued Dan'l, ignoring his sister, 'and, takin' them counterfeit notes from my hand, sez he: "Them notes belong to *me* now," sez he, "and I'm goin' to destroy 'em." And with that he walks over to the fire as stiff as a poker, and held them notes in it until they were burnt clean up.'

'Well! But that was honest and straightforward in him!' said Mrs. Bigsby.

'Um! but it wasn't business—and ye see ——' Dan'l paused and rubbed his chin.

'Well; go on!' said Mrs. Bigsby impatiently.

'Well, ye see, neither him nor me was very

smart in detecting counterfeits or even knowin' 'em, and——'

'Well! For goodness sake, Dan'l, speak out!'

'Well—*the dum fool burnt up three good bills*, and we neither of us knew it!'

V

THE 'unexpected' which Dan'l Borem had hinted might characterise his future conduct was first intimated by his treatment of the 'Widow Cully,' an aged and impoverished woman, whose property was heavily mortgaged to him. He had curtly summoned her to come to his office on Christmas-day and settle up. Frightened, hopeless, and in the face of a snowstorm, the old woman attended, but was surprised by receiving a 'satisfaction piece' in full from the Banker, and a gorgeous Christmas dinner. 'All the same,' said Mrs. Bigsby to Lummox, 'Dan'l might hev done all this without frightenin' the poor old critter into a nervous fever, chillin' her through by makin' her walk two miles through the snow, and keepin' her on the rugged edge o' despair for

two mortal hours! But it's his humorous way.'

'Did he give any reason for being so lenient to the widow?' asked Lummox.

'He said that her son had given him a core of his apple when they were boys together. Dan'l ez mighty thoughtful o' folks that was kind to him in them days.'

'Is that all?' said Lummox astonished.

'Well—I've kinder thought suthin' else,' said Mrs. Bigsby hesitatingly.

'What?'

'That its bein' Christmas-day—and as I've heard tell that's *no day in law*, but just like Sunday—Dan'l mebbe thought that he might crawl outer that satisfaction piece, ef he ever wanted ter! Dan'l is mighty cute.'

VI

Mr. John Lummox was not behind his employer in developing unexpected traits of character. Hitherto holding aloof from his neighbours in Old Folksville, he suddenly went to a social gathering, and distinguished himself as the principal and popular guest of the evening. As Dan'l Borem afterward told his sister: 'He was one o' them Combination Minstrels and Variety Shows in one. He sang through a whole opery, made the pianner jest howl, gave some recitations—Casabianker and Betsy and I Are Out; imitated all them tragedians; did tricks with cards and fetched rabbits outer hats, besides liftin' the pianner with two men sittin' on it, jest by his teeth. Created snakes!' said Borem, concluding his account, which here is necessarily abbreviated,

'ef he learnt all that in his two years in Europe I ain't sayin' anythin' more agin' eddication and furrin' travel after this! Why, the next day there was quite a run on the Bank jest to see *him*. He is makin' the bizness pop'lar.'

'Then ye think ye'll get along together?'

'I reckon we'll hitch hosses,' said Dan'l with a smile.

A few weeks later, one evening, Dan'l Borem sat with his sister alone. John Lummox, who was now residing with them, was attending a social engagement. Mrs. Bigsby knew that Dan'l had something to communicate —but knew that he would do so in his own way.

'Speakin' o' hoss trades,' he began.

'We *wasn't* and we ain't goin' to,' said Mrs. Bigsby with great promptness. 'I've heard enough of 'em.'

'But this here one hez suthin' to do with your fr'en', John Lummox,' said Dan'l with a chuckle.

Mrs. Bigsby stared. 'Go on, then,' she said, 'but, for goodness' sake, cut it short.'

Dan'l threw away his quid and replenished it from his silver tobacco box. Mrs. Bigsby shuddered slightly as she recognised the usual preliminary to prolixity, but determined, as far as possible, to make her brother brief.

'It mout be two weeks ago,' began Dan'l, 'that I see John Lummox over at Palmyra, where he'd bin visitin'. He was drivin' a hoss, the beautifullest critter—for colour—I ever saw. It was yaller, with mane and tail a kinder golden, like the hair o' them British Blondes that was here in the Variety Show.'

'Dan'l!' exclaimed Mrs. Bigsby, horrified. 'And you allowed you never went thar!'

'Saw 'em on the posters—and mebbe the colour was a little brighter thar,' said Dan'l carelessly—'but who's interruptin', now?'

'Go on,' said Mrs. Bigsby.

'"Got a fine hoss thar," sez I; "reckon I never see such a purty colour," sez I. "He is purty," sez he, "per'aps too purty for *me* to be

a-drivin', but he isn't fast." "I ain't speakin' o' that," sez I; "it's his looks that I'm talkin' of; whar might ye hev got him?" "He was offered to me by a fr'en' o' me boyhood," sez he; "he's a *pinto* mustang," sez he, "from Californy, whar they breed 'em." "What's a *pinto* hoss?" sez I. "The same ez a calico hoss," sez he; "what they have in cirkises, but ye never see 'em that colour." En' he was right, for when I looked him over I never *did* see such a soft and silky coat, and his mane and tail jest glistened. "It *is* a little too showy for ye," sez I, "but *I* might take him at a fair price. What's your fr'en' askin'?" "He won't sell him to anybody but me," sez Lummox; "he's a horror o' hoss traders, anyway, and his price is more like a gift to a fr'en'." "What might that price be, ef it's a fair question?" sez I, for the more I looked at the hoss the more I liked him. "A hundred and fifty dollars," sez he; "but my fr'en' would ask *you* double that." "Couldn't *you* and *me* make a trade?" sez I; "I'll exchange ye that roan

mare, that's worth two hundred, for this hoss and fifty dollars." With that he drew himself up, and sez he : "Mr. Borem," sez he, "I share my fr'en's opinion about hoss tradin', and I promised my mother I'd never swap hosses. You ought to know me by this time."'

'That's so!' said Mrs. Bigsby; 'I'm wonderin' ye dared to ax him.'

Dan'l passed his hand over his mouth, and continued : '"I dunno but you're right, Lummox," sez I; "per'aps it's jest as well as thar wasn't *two* in the Bank in that bizness." But the more I looked at the hoss the more I hankered arter him. "Look here," sez I, "I tell ye what I'll do! I'll *lend* you my hoss and you'll *lend* me yourn. I'll draw up a paper to that effect, and provide that in case o' accidents, ef I don't return you your hoss, I'll agree to pay you a hundred and fifty dollars. You'll give me the same kind o' paper about my hoss—with the proviso that you pay me two hundred for him!" "Excuse me, Mr. Borem," sez he, "but that difference of fifty

makes a hoss trade accordin' to my mind. It's agin' my principles to make such an agreement." '

'An' he was right, Dan'l,' said Mrs. Bigsby approvingly.

But Dan'l wiped his mouth again, leaving, however, a singular smile on it. 'Well, ez I wanted that hoss, I jest thought and thought! I knew I could get two hundred and fifty for him easy, and that Lummox didn't know anythin' of his valoo, and I finally agreed to make the swap even. "What do you call him?" sez I. "Pegasus," sez he—"the poet's hoss, on account o' his golden mane," sez he. That made me laff—for I never knew a poet ez could afford to hev a hoss—much less one like that! But I said: "I'll borry Pegasus o' you on those terms." The next day I took the hoss to Jonesville; Lummox was right, he wasn't *fast*, but, jest as I expected, he made a sensation! Folks crowded round him whenever I stopped; wimmin followed him and children cried for him. I could hev sold him

for three hundred without leavin' town! "So ye call him Pegasus," sez Doc Smith, grinnin'; "I didn't know ye was subject to the divine afflatus, Dan'l." "I don' offen hev it," sez I, "but when I do I find a little straight gin does me good." "So did Byron," sez he, chucklin'. But even if I had called him "Beelzebub" the hull town would hev bin jest as crazy over him. Well, as it was comin' on to rain I started jest after sundown for home. But it came ter blow, an' ter pour cats and dogs, an' I was nigh washed out o' the buggy, besides losin' my way and gettin' inter ditches and puddles, and I hed to stop at Staples' Half-Way House and put up for the night. In the mornin' I riz up early and goes into the stable yard and the first thing I sees was the 'ostler. "I hope ye giv' my hoss a good scrub down," I sez, "as I told ye, for his colour is that delicate the smallest spot shows. It's a very rare colour for a hoss." "I was hopin' it might be," sez he. I was a little huffed at that, and I sez: "It's considered a very beautiful colour." "Mebbe it

is," sez he, "but I never cared much for fire-works." "What yer mean?" sez I. "Look here, Squire!" sez he; "I don't mind scourin' and rubbin' down a hoss that will stay the same colour *twice*, but when he gets to playin' a kaladeoskope on me, I kick!" "Trot him out," sez I, beginnin' to feel queer. With that he fetched out the hoss! For a minit I hed to ketch on to the fence to keep myself from fallin'. I swoony! ef he didn't look like a case of measles on top o' yaller fever—'cept where the harness had touched him, and that was kinder stencilled out all over him. Thar was places whar the 'ostler had washed down to the foundation colour—a kind o' chewed licorice! Then I knew that somebody had bin sold terrible, and I reckoned it might be me! But I said nothin' to the 'ostler, and waited until dark, when I drove him over here, and put him in the stables—lettin' no one see him. In the mornin' Lummox comes to me, and sez he: "I'm glad to see you back," sez he, "for my conscience is troublin' me about

that hoss agreement; it looks too much like a hoss trade," sez he, "and I'm goin' to send the hoss back." "Mebbe your conscience," sez I, "may trouble you a little more ef you'll step this way"; and with that I takes his arm and leads him round to the stable and brings out the hoss.

'Well, Lummox never changes ez much as a hair, ez he puts up his eyeglasses. "I'm not good at what's called 'pop'lar Art,'" sez he. "Is it a chromo—or your own work?" sez he, critical like.'

'"It's *your hoss*," sez I.

'He looks at me a minit and then drors a paper from his pocket. "This paper," sez he in his quiet way, "was drored up by you and is a covenant to return to me a yaller hoss with golden mane and tail—or a hundred and fifty dollars. Ez I don't see the hoss anywhere—mebbe you've got the hundred and fifty dollars handy?" sez he. "Suppose I hadn't the money?" sez I. "I should be obliged," sez

he, in a kind o' pained Christian-martyr way, "ter sell *your* hoss for two hundred, and send the money to my fr'en'." We looked at each other steddy for a minit and then I counts him out a hundred and fifty. He took the money sad-like and then sez: "Mr. Borem," sez he, "this is a great morril lesson to us," and went back to the office. In the arternoon I called in an old hoss dealer that I knew and shows him Pegasus.

'"He wants renewin'," sez he.

'"Wot's that?" sez I.

'"A few more bottles o' that British Blonde Hair Dye to set him up agin. That's wot they allus do in the cirkis, whar he kem from."

'Then I went back to the office and I took down my sign. "What's that you're doin'?" sez Lummox with a sickly kind o' smile. "Are you goin' out o' the bizness?"

'"No, I'm only goin' to change that sign from 'Dan'l Borem' to 'Borem and Lummox,'"

sez I. "I've concluded it's cheaper for me to take you inter partnership now than to continue in this way, which would only end in your hevin' to take me in later. I preferred to *do it fust.*"'

VII

A RICH man, and settled in business, John Lummox concluded that he would marry Mary Bike. With that far-sighted logic which had always characterised him he reasoned that, having first met her on a liner, he would find her again on one if he took passage to Europe. He did—but she was down on the passenger list as Mrs. Edwin Wraggles. The result of their interview was given to Mrs. Bigsby by Dan'l Borem in his own dialect.

'Ez far as I kin see, it was like the Deacon's Sunday hoss trade, bein' all "Ef it wassent." "Ef ye wasn't Mrs. Wraggles," sez Lummox, sez he, "I'd be tellin' ye how I've loved ye ever sense I first seed ye. Ef ye wasn't Mrs. Wraggles, I'd be squeezin' yer hand," sez he; "ef ye wasn't Mrs. Wraggles,

I'd be askin' ye to marry me." Then the gal ups and sez, sez she: "But I *ain't* Mrs. Wraggles," sez she; "Mrs. Wraggles is my sister, and couldn't come, so I'm travellin' on her ticket, and that's how my name is Wraggles on the passenger-list." "But why didn't ye tell me so, at once?" sez Lummox. "This is an episoode o' protracted humour," sez she, "and *I'm* bound to have a show in it some how!"'

'Well!' said Mrs. Bigsby breathlessly; 'then he *did* marry her?'

'Darned ef I know. He never said so straight out—but that's like Lummox.'

STORIES THREE

BY R-DY--D K-PL--G

I

FOR SIMLA REASONS

Some people say that improbable things don't necessarily happen in India—but these people never find improbabilities anywhere. This sounds clever, but you will at once perceive that it really means the opposite of what I intended to say. So we'll drop it. What I am trying to tell you is that after Sparkley had that affair with Miss Millikens a singular change came over him. He grew abstracted and solitary—holding dark séances with himself—which was odd, as everybody knew he never cared a rap for the Millikens girl. It was even said he was off his head—which is rhyme. But his reason was undoubtedly affected, for he had been heard to mutter incoherently at the Club, and, strangest of all, to answer

questions *that were never asked!* This was so awkward in that Branch of the Civil Department of which he was a high official—where the rule was exactly the reverse—that he was presently invalided on full pay! Then he disappeared. Clever people said it was because the Department was afraid he had still much to answer for; stupid people simply envied him.

Mrs. Awksby, whom everybody knew had been the cause of breaking off the match, was now wild to know the reason of Sparkley's retirement. She attacked heaven and earth and even went a step higher—to the Viceroy. At the viceregal ball I saw, behind the curtains of a window, her rolling violet-blue eyes with a singular glitter in them. It was the reflection of the Viceroy's star, although the rest of his Excellency was hidden in the curtain. I heard him saying, 'Come now! really, now, you are!—you know you are!' in reply to her cooing questioning. Then she made a dash at me and captured me.

'What did you hear?'

'Nothing I should not have heard.'

'Don't be like all the other men—you silly boy!' she answered. 'I was only trying to find out something about Sparkley. And I will find it out, too,' she said, clinching her thin little hand. 'And what's more,' she added, turning on me suddenly, '*you* shall help me!'

'I?' I said in surprise.

'Don't pretend!' she said poutingly. 'You're too clever to believe he's cut up over the Millikens. No—it's something awful or—another woman! Now, if I knew as much of India as you do—and wasn't a woman, and could go where I liked—I'd go to Bungalooré and find him.'

'Oh! You have his address?' I said.

'Certainly! What did you expect I was behind the curtain with the Viceroy for?' she said, opening her violet eyes innocently. 'It's Bungalooré—First Turning to the Right—At the End of the Passage.'

Bungalooré—near Ghouli Pass—in the

Jungle! I knew the place—a spot of dank pestilence and mystery. 'You never could have gone there,' I said.

'You do not know *what* I could do for a *friend*,' she said sweetly, veiling her eyes in demure significance.

'Oh, come off the roof!' I said bluntly.

She could be obedient when it was necessary. She came off. Not without her revenge. 'Try to remember you are not at school with the Stalkies,' she said, and turned away.

I went to Bungalooré, not on her account—but my own. If you don't know India, you won't know Bungalooré. It's all that and more. An egg dropped by a vulture, sat upon and addled by the Department. But I knew the house and walked boldly in. A lion walked out of one door as I came in at another. We did this two or three times—and found it amusing. A large cobra in the hall rose up, bowed as I passed, and respectfully removed his hood.

I found the poor old boy at the end of

the passage. It might have been the passage between Calais and Dover—he looked so green, so limp and dejected. I affected not to notice it, and threw myself in a chair.

He gazed at me for a moment and then said, 'Did you hear what the chair was saying?'

It was an ordinary bamboo arm-chair and had creaked after the usual fashion of bamboo chairs. I said so.

He cast his eyes to the ceiling. 'He calls it "creaking,"' he murmured. 'No matter,' he continued aloud, 'its remark was not of a complimentary nature. It's very difficult to get really polite furniture.'

The man was evidently stark, staring mad. I still affected not to observe it, and asked him if that was why he left Simla.

'There were Simla reasons, certainly,' he replied. 'But you think I came here for solitude! *Solitude!*' he repeated with a laugh. 'Why I hold daily conversations with any blessed thing in this house, from the veranda to the chimney-stack—with any stick of

furniture, from the foot-stool to the towel-horse. I get more out of it than the gabble at the Club. You look surprised. Listen! I took this thing up in my leisure hours in the Department. I had read much about the conversation of animals. I argued that if animals conversed, why shouldn't inanimate things communicate with each other? You cannot prove that animals don't converse—neither can you prove that inanimate objects *do not*. See?'

I was thunderstruck with the force of his logic.

'Of course,' he continued, 'there are degrees of intelligence, and that makes it difficult. For instance, a mahogany table would not talk like a rush-bottomed kitchen chair.' He stopped suddenly, listened, and replied, 'I really couldn't say.'

'I didn't speak,' I said.

'I know *you* didn't. But your chair asked me "how long that fool was going to stay." I replied as you heard. Pray don't move—I

intend to change that chair for one more accustomed to polite society. To continue: I perfected myself in the language, and it was awfully jolly at first. Whenever I went by train, I heard not only all the engines said, but what every blessed carriage thought, that joined in the conversation. If you chaps only knew what rot those whistles can get off! And as for the brakes, they can beat any mule driver in cursing. Then, after a time, it got rather monotonous—and I took a short sea trip for my health. But, by Jove, every blessed inch of the whole ship—from the screw to the bowsprit—had something to say, and the bad language used by the garboard strake when the ship rolled was something too awful! You don't happen to know what the garboard strake is, do you?'

'No,' I replied.

'No more do I. That's the dreadful thing about it. You've got to listen to chaps that you don't know. Why, coming home on my bicycle the other day there was an awful row

between some infernal "sprocket" and the "ball bearings" of the machine, and I never knew before there were such things in the whole concern.'

I thought I had got at his secret, and said carelessly: 'Then I suppose this was the reason why you broke off your engagement with Miss Millikens?'

'Not at all,' he said coolly. 'Nothing to do with it. That is quite another affair. It's a very queer story; would you like to hear it?'

'By all means.' I took out my note-book.

'You remember that night of the Amateur Theatricals, got up by the White Hussars, when the lights suddenly went out all over the house?'

'Yes,' I replied, 'I heard about it.'

'Well, I had gone down there that evening with the determination of proposing to Mary Millikens the first chance that offered. She sat just in front of me, her sister Jane next, and her mother—smart Widow Millikens—

who was a bit larky on her own account, you remember—the next on the bench. When the lights went out and the panic and tittering began I saw my chance! I leaned forward, and in a voice that would just reach Mary's ear I said, "I have long wished to tell you how my life is bound up with you, dear, and I never, never can be happy without you"—when just then there was a mighty big shove down my bench from the fellows beyond me who were trying to get out. But I held on like grim death, and struggled back again into position, and went on: "You'll forgive my taking a chance like this, but I felt I could no longer conceal my love for you," when I'm blest if there wasn't another shove, and though I'd got hold of her little hand and had a kind of squeeze in return, I was drifted away again and had to fight my way back. But I managed to finish, and said, "If the devotion of a lifetime will atone for this hurried avowal of my love for you, let me hope for a response"—and just then the infernal lights were turned on, and

there I was holding the widow's hand and she nestling on my shoulder, and the two girls in hysterics on the other side. You see, I never knew that they were shoved down on their bench every time, just as I was, and of course, when I got back to where I was I'd just skipped one of them each time! Yes, sir! I had made that proposal in *three* sections—a part to each girl, winding up with the mother! No explanation was possible, and I left Simla next day. Naturally, it wasn't a thing they could talk about, either!'

'Then you think Mrs. Awksby had nothing to do with it?' I said.

'Nothing—absolutely nothing. By the way, if you see that lady, you might tell her that I have possession of that brocade easy-chair which used to stand in the corner of her boudoir. You remember it—faded white and yellow, with one of the casters off and a little frayed at the back, but rather soft-spoken and amiable? But of course you don't understand *that.* I bought it after she moved into her new bungalow.'

'But why should I tell her that?' I asked in wonder.

'Nothing—except that I find it very amusing with its reminiscences of the company she used to entertain, and her confidences generally. Good-bye—take care of the lion in the hall. He always couches on the left for a spring. Ta-ta!'

I hurried away. When I returned to Simla I told Mrs. Awksby of my discoveries—and spoke of the arm-chair.

I fancied she coloured slightly, but quickly recovered.

'Dear old Sparkley,' she said sweetly; 'he *was* a champion liar!'

II

A PRIVATE'S HONOUR

I HAD not seen Mulledwiney for several days. Knowing the man—this looked bad. So I dropped in on the Colonel. I found him in deep thought. This looked bad, too, for old Cockey Wax—as he was known to everybody in the Hill districts but himself—wasn't given to thinking. I guessed the cause and told him so.

'Yes,' he said wearily, 'you are right! It's the old story; Mulledwiney, Bleareyed and Otherwise are at it again. Drink followed by Clink. Even now two corporals and a private are sitting on Mulledwiney's head to keep him quiet, and Bleareyed is chained to an elephant.'

'Perhaps,' I suggested, 'you are unnecessarily severe.'

'Do you really think so? Thank you *so* much! I am always glad to have a civilian's opinion on military matters—and *vice versa*—it broadens one so! And yet—am I severe? I am willing, for instance, to overlook their raid upon a native village, and the ransom they demanded for a native inspector! I have overlooked their taking the horses out of my carriage for their own use. I am content also to believe that my fowls meekly succumb to jungle fever and cholera. But there are some things I cannot ignore. The carrying off of the great god Vishnu from the Sacred Shrine at Ducidbad by The Three for the sake of the priceless opals in its eyes——'

'But I never heard of *that*,' I interrupted eagerly. 'Tell me.'

'Ah!' said the Colonel playfully, 'that—as you so often, and so amusingly say—is "Another Story!" Yet I would have overlooked the theft of the opals—if they had not substituted

two of the Queen's regimental buttons for the eyes of the god. This, while it did not deceive the ignorant priests, had a deep political and racial significance. You are aware, of course, that the great mutiny was occasioned by the issue of cartridges to the native troops greased with hog's fat—forbidden by their religion.'

'But these three men could themselves alone quell a mutiny,' I replied.

The Colonel grasped my hand warmly. 'Thank you. So they could. I never thought of that.' He looked relieved. For all that, he presently passed his hand over his forehead and nervously chewed his cheroot.

'There is something else,' I said.

'You are right. There is. It is a secret. Promise me it shall go no further—than the Press? Nay, swear that you will *keep* it for the Press!

'I promise.'

'Thank you *so* much. It is a matter of my own and Mulledwiney's. The fact is, we have had a *personal* difficulty.' He paused, glanced

around him and continued in a low, agitated voice: 'Yesterday I came upon him as he was sitting leaning against the barrack wall. In a spirit of playfulness—mere playfulness, I assure you, sir—I poked him lightly in the shoulder with my stick, saying "Boo!" He turned—and I shall never forget the look he gave me.'

'Good heavens!' I gasped, 'you touched—absolutely *touched*—Mulledwiney?'

'Yes,' he said hurriedly, 'I knew what you would say; it was against the Queen's Regulations—and—there was his sensitive nature which shrinks from even a harsh word; but I did it, and of course he has me in his power.'

'And you have touched him?' I repeated —'touched his private honour!'

'Yes! But I shall atone for it! I have already arranged with him that we shall have it out between ourselves alone, in the jungle, stripped to the buff, with our fists—Queensberry rules! I haven't fought since I stood up against Spinks Major—you remember old Spinks,

now of the Bombay Offensibles?—at Eton.' And the old boy pluckily bared his skinny arm.

'It may be serious,' I said.

'I have thought of that. I have a wife, several children and an aged parent in England. If I fall, they must never know. You must invent a story for them. I have thought of cholera, but that is played out; you know we have already tried it on The Boy who was Thrown Away. Invent something quiet, peaceable and respectable—as far removed from fighting as possible. What do you say to measles?'

'Not half bad,' I returned.

'Measles let it be, then! Say I caught it from Wee Willie Winkie. You do not think it too incredible?' he added timidly.

'Not more than *your* story,' I said.

He grasped my hand, struggling violently with his emotion. Then he struggled with me—and I left hurriedly. Poor old boy! The funeral was well attended, however, and no one knew the truth, not even myself.

III

JUNGLE FOLK

It was high noon of a warm summer's day when Moo Kow came down to the watering-place. Miaow, otherwise known as 'Puskat' —the warmth-loving one—was crouching on a limb that overhung the pool, sunning herself. Brer Rabbit—but that is Another Story by Another Person.

Three or four Gee Gees, already at the pool, moved away on the approach of Moo Kow.

'Why do ye stand aside?' said the Moo Kow.

'Why do you say "ye"?' said the Gee Gees together.

'Because it's more impressive than "you." Don't you know that all animals talk that way in English?' said the Moo Kow.

'And they also say "thou"—and don't you forget it!' interrupted Miaow from the tree. 'I learnt that from a Man Cub.'

The animals were silent. They did not like Miaow's slang, and were jealous of her occasionally sitting on a Man Cub's lap. Once Dun-kee, a poor relation of the Gee Gees, had tried it on, disastrously—but that is also Another and a more Aged Story.

'We are ridden by The English—please to observe the Capital letters,' said Pi Böl, the Leader of the Gee Gees, proudly. 'They are a mighty race who ride anything and everybody. D'ye mind that—I mean, Look ye well to it!'

'What should they know of England who only England know?' said Miaow.

'Is that a conundrum?' asked the Moo Kow.

'No; it's poetry,' said the Miaow.

'I know England,' said Pi Böl prancingly. 'I used to go from the Bank to Islington three times a day—I mean,' he added hurriedly,

'before I became a screw—I should say, a screw-gun horse.'

'And I,' said the Moo Kow, 'am terrible. When the young women and children in the village see me approach they fly shriekingly. My presence alone has scattered their sacred festival—The Sundés Kool Piknik. I strike terror to their inmost souls, and am more feared by them than even Kreep-mows, the insidious! And yet, behold! I have taken the place of the mothers of men, and I have nourished the mighty ones of the earth! But that,' said the Moo Kow, turning her head aside bashfully, 'that is Anudder Story.'

A dead silence fell on the pool.

'And I,' said Miaow, lifting up her voice, 'I am the horror and haunter of the night season. When I pass like the night wind over the roofs of the houses men shudder in their beds and tremble. When they hear my voice as I creep stealthily along their balconies they cry to their gods for succour. They arise, and from their windows they offer me their

priceless household treasures—the sacred vessels dedicated to their great god Shiv—which they call "Shivin Mugs"—the Kloes Brösh, the Boo-jak—urging me to fly them! And yet,' said Miaow mournfully, 'it is but my love song! Think ye what they would do if I were on the war-path.'

Another dead silence fell on the pool. Then arose that strange, mysterious, indefinable Thing, known as 'The Scent.' The animals sniffed.

'It heralds the approach of the Stalkies—the most famous of British Skool Boaz,' said the Moo Kow. 'They have just placed a decaying guinea-pig, two white mice in an advanced state of decomposition, and a single slice of Limburger cheese in the bed of their tutor. They had previously skilfully diverted the drains so that they emptied into the drawing-room of the head-master. They have just burned down his house in an access of noble zeal, and are fighting among themselves for the spoil. Hark! do ye hear them?'

A wild medley of shrieks and howls had arisen, and an irregular mob of strange creatures swept out of the distance toward the pool. Some were like pygmies, some had bloody noses. Their talk consisted of feverish, breathless ejaculations—a gibberish in which the words 'rot,' 'oach' and 'giddy' were pre-eminent. Some were exciting themselves by chewing a kind of 'bhang' made from the plant called pappahmint—others had their faces streaked with djam.

'But who is this they are ducking in the pool?' asked Pi Böl.

'It is one who has foolishly and wantonly conceived that his parents have sent him here to study,' said the Moo Kow; 'but that is against the rules of the Stalkies, who accept study only as a punishment.'

'Then these be surely the "Bander Log"—the monkey folk—of whom the good Rhuddyidd has told us,' said a Gee Gee—'the ones who have no purpose—and forget everything.'

'Fool!' said the Moo Kow. 'Know ye

not that the great Rhuddyidd has said that the Stalkies become Major-Generals, V.C.'s and C.B.'s of the English? Truly, they are great. Look now, ye shall see one of the greatest traits of the English Stalky.'

One of the pygmy Stalkies was offering a bun to a larger one, who hesitated, but took it coldly.

'Behold! it is one of the greatest traits of this mighty race not to show any emotion. He *would* take the bun—he *has* taken it! —he is pleased—but he may not show it. Observe him eat.'

The taller Stalkie, after eating the bun, quietly kicked the giver, knocked off his hat, and turned away with a calm, immovable face.

'Good!' said the Moo Kow. 'Ye would not dream that he was absolutely choking with grateful emotion?'

'We would not,' said the animals.

'But why are they now all running back the way they came?' asked Pi Böl.

'They are going back to punishment.

Great is its power. Have ye not heard the gospel of Rhuddyidd the mighty? "Force is everything! Gentleness won't wash, courtesy is deceitful. Politeness is foreign. Be ye beaten that ye may beat. Pass the kick on."'

But here he was interrupted by the appearance of three soldiers who were approaching the watering-place.

'Ye are now,' said the Moo Kow, 'with the main guard. The first is Bleareyed, who carries a raven in a cage, which he has stolen from the wife of a deputy commissioner. He will paint the bird snow white and sell it as a dove to the same lady. The second is Otherwise, who is dragging a small garden engine, of which he has despoiled a native gardener, whom he has felled with a single blow. The third is Mulledwiney, swinging a cut-glass decanter of sherry which he has just snatched from the table of his colonel. Mulledwiney and Otherwise will play the engine upon Bleareyed, who is suffering from heat apoplexy and djim-djams.'

The three soldiers seated themselves in the pool.

'They are going to tell awful war stories now,' said the Moo Kow, 'stories that are large and strong! Some people are shocked —others like 'em.'

Then, he that was called Mulledwiney told a story. In the middle of it Miaow got up from the limb of the tree, coughed slightly and put her paw delicately over her mouth. 'You must excuse me,' she said faintly. 'I am taken this way sometimes—and I have left my salts at home. Thanks! I can get down myself!' The next moment she had disappeared, but was heard coughing in the distance.

Mulledwiney winked at his companions and continued his story:

'Wid that we wor in the thick av the foight. Whin I say "thick" I mane it, sorr! We wor that jammed together, divil a bit cud we shoot or cut! At furrest, I had lashed two mushkits together wid the baynits out so—like a hay fork—and, getting the haymaker's lift

on thim, I just lifted two Paythians out—one an aych baynit—and passed 'em, aisy-like, over me head to the rear rank for them to finish. But what wid the blud gettin' into me oi's, I was blinded, and the pressure kept incraysin' until me arrums was thrussed like a fowl to me sides, and sorra a bit cud I move but me jaws!'

'And bloomin' well you knew how to use them,' said Otherwise.

'Thrue for you—though ye don't mane it!' said Mulledwiney, playfully tapping Otherwise on the head with the decanter till the cut glass slowly shivered. 'So, begorra! there wor nothing left for me to do but to *ate* thim! Wirra! but it was the crooel worruk.'

'Excuse me, my lord,' interrupted the gasping voice of Pi Böl as he began to back from the pool, 'I am but a horse, I know, and being built in that way—naturally have the stomach of one—yet, really, my lord, this—er ——' And his voice was gone.

The next moment he had disappeared. Mulledwiney looked around with affected concern.

'Save us! But we've cleaned out the Jungle! Sure, there's not a baste left but ourselves!'

It was true. The watering-place was empty. Moo Kow, Miaow and the Gee Gees had disappeared. Presently there was a booming crash and a long, deep rumbling among the distant hills. Then they knew they were near the old Moulmein Pagoda and the dawn had come up like thunder out of China 'cross the bay. It always came up that way there. The strain was too great, and day was actually breaking.

'ZUT-SKI'

THE PROBLEM OF A WICKED FEME SOLE

BY M-R-E C-R-LLI

'ZUT-SKI'

I

THE great pyramid towered up from the desert with its apex toward the moon which hung in the sky. For centuries it had stood thus, disdaining the aid of gods or man, being, as the Sphinx herself observed, able to stand up for itself. And this was no small praise from that sublime yet mysterious female who had seen the ages come and go, empires rise and fall, novelist succeed novelist, and who, for eons and cycles the cynosure and centre of admiration and men's idolatrous worship, had yet—wonderful for a woman—through it all kept her head, which now alone remained to survey calmly the present. Indeed, at that moment that magnificent and peaceful face

seemed to have lost—with a few unimportant features—its usual expression of speculative wisdom and intense disdain; its mouth smiled, its left eyelid seemed to droop. As the opal tints of dawn deepened upon it, the eyelid seemed to droop lower, closed, and quickly recovered itself twice. You would have thought the Sphinx had winked.

Then arose a voice like a wind on the desert—but really from the direction of the Nile, where a hired dahabiyeh lay moored to the bank—'Arry Axes! 'Arry Axes!' With it came also a flapping, trailing vision from the water—the sacred Ibis itself—and with wings aslant drifted mournfully away to its own creaking echo: 'K'raksis! K'raksis!' Again arose the weird voice: 'Arry Axes! Wotcher doin' of?' And again the Ibis croaked its wild refrain: 'K'raksis! K'raksis!' Moonlight and the hour wove their own mystery (for which the author is not responsible), and the voice was heard no more. But when the full

day sprang in glory over the desert, it illuminated the few remaining but sufficiently large features of the Sphinx with a burning saffron radiance! The sphinx had indeed blushed!

II

It was the full season at Cairo. The wealth and fashion of Bayswater, South Kensington, and even the bosky Wood of the Evangelist had sent their latest luxury and style to flout the tombs of the past with the ghastly flippancy of to-day. The cheap tripper was there—the latest example of the Darwinian theory—ape-like, flea and curio hunting! Shamelessly inquisitive and always hungry, what did he know of the Sphinx or the pyramids or the voice—and, for the matter of that, what did they know of him? And yet he was not half bad in comparison with the 'swagger people'—these people who pretend to have lungs and what not, and instead of galloping on merry hunters through the frost and snow of Piccadilly and Park, instead of

enjoying the roaring fires of piled logs in the evening, at the first approach of winter steal away to the Land of the Sun, and decline to die, like honest Britons, on British soil. And then they know nothing of the Egyptians and are horrified at 'bakshish,' which they really ought to pay for the privilege of shocking the straight-limbed, naked-footed Arab in his single rough garment with their baggy elephant-legged trousers! And they know nothing of the mystic land of the old gods, filled with profound enigmas of the supernatural, dark secrets yet unexplored except in this book. Well might the great Memnon murmur after this lapse of these thousand years, 'They're making me tired!'

Such was the blissful, self-satisfied ignorance of Sir Midas Pyle, or as Lord Fitz-Fulke, with his delightful imitation of the East London accent, called him, Sir 'Myde His Pyle,' as he leaned back on his divan in the Grand Cairo Hotel. He was the vulgar editor and proprietor of a vulgar London newspaper, and had brought

his wife with him, who was vainly trying to marry off his faded daughters. There was to be a fancy-dress ball at the hotel that night, and Lady Pyle hoped that her girls, if properly disguised, might have a better chance. Here, too, was Lady Fitz-Fulke, whose mother was immortalised by Byron—sixty if a day, yet still dressing youthfully—who had sought the land of the Sphinx in the faint hope that in the contiguity of that lady she might pass for being young. Alaster McFeckless, a splendid young Scotchman—already dressed as a Florentine sailor of the fifteenth century, which enabled him to show his magnificent calves quite as well as in his native highland dress, and who had added with characteristic noble pride a sporran to his costume—was lolling on another divan.

'Oh, those exquisite, those magnificent eyes of hers! Eh, sirs!' he murmured suddenly, as waking from a dream.

'Oh, damn her eyes!' said Lord Fitz-Fulke languidly. 'Tell you what, old man, you're just gone on that girl!'

'Ha!' roared McFeckless, springing to his feet, 'ye will be using such language of the bonniest——'

'You will excuse me, gentlemen,' said Sir Midas—who hated scenes unless he had a trusted reporter with him—'but I think it is time for me to go upstairs and put on my Windsor uniform, which I find exceedingly convenient for these mixed assemblies.' He withdrew, caressing his protuberant paunch with some dignity, as the two men glanced fiercely at each other.

In another moment they might have sprung at each other's throats. But luckily at this instant a curtain was pushed aside as if by some waiting listener, and a thin man entered, dressed in cap and gown—which would have been simply academic but for his carrying in one hand behind him a bundle of birch twigs. It was Dr. Haustus Pilgrim—a noted London practitioner and specialist—dressed as 'Ye Olde-fashioned Pedagogue.' He was presumably spending his holiday on the Nile in a large

dahabiyeh with a number of friends, among whom he counted the two momentary antagonists he had just interrupted ; but those who knew the doctor's far-reaching knowledge and cryptic researches believed he had his own scientific motives.

The two men turned quickly as he entered ; the angry light faded from their eyes and an awed and respectful submission to the intruder took its place. He walked quietly toward them, put a lozenge in the mouth of one and felt the pulse of the other, gazing critically at both.

'We will be all right in a moment,' he said, with professional confidence.

'I say!' said Fitz-Fulke, gazing at the doctor's costume, 'you look dooced smart in those togs, don'tcherknow.'

'They suit me,' said the doctor, with a playful swish of his birch twigs, at which the two grave men shuddered. 'But you were speaking of somebody's beautiful eyes.'

'The Princess Zut-Ski's,' returned McFeckless eagerly; 'and this daft callant said——'

'He didn't like them,' put in Fitz-Fulke promptly.

'Ha!' said the doctor sharply, 'and why not, sir?' As Fitz-Fulke hesitated, he added brusquely: 'There! Run away and play! I've business with this young man,' pointing to McFeckless.

As Fitz-Fulke escaped gladly from the room, the doctor turned to McFeckless. 'It won't do, my boy. The Princess is not for you—you'll only break your heart and ruin your family over her! That's my advice. Chuck her!'

'But I cannot,' said McFeckless humbly. 'Think of her weirdly beautiful eyes.'

'I see,' said the doctor, meditatively; 'sort of makes you feel creepy? Kind of all-overishness, eh? That's like her. But whom have we here?'

He was staring at a striking figure that had just entered, closely followed by a crowd of

admiring spectators. And, indeed, he seemed worthy of the homage. His magnificent form was closely attired in a velveteen jacket and trousers, with a singular display of pearl buttons along the seams, that were absolutely lavish in their quantity; a hat adorned with feathers and roses completed his singularly picturesque equipment.

'Chevalier!' burst out McFeckless in breathless greeting.

'Ah, *mon ami*! What good chance?' returned the newcomer, rushing to him and kissing him on both cheeks, to the British horror of Sir Midas, who had followed. 'Ah, but you are perfect!' he added, kissing his fingers in admiration of McFeckless's Florentine dress.

'But you?—what is this ravishing costume?' asked McFeckless, with a pang of jealousy. 'You are god-like.'

'It is the dress of what you call the Koster—a transplanted Phenician tribe,' answered the other. 'They who knocked 'em in the road

of Old Kent—know you not the legend?' As he spoke, he lifted his superb form to a warrior's height and gesture.

'But is this quite correct?' asked Fitz-Fulke of the doctor.

'Perfectly,' said the doctor oracularly. 'The renowned "'Arry Axes"—I beg his pardon,' he interrupted himself hastily, 'I mean the Chevalier—is perfect in his archæology and ethnology. The Koster is originally a Gipsy, which is but a corruption of the word "Egyptian," and, if I mistake not, that gentleman is a lineal descendant.'

'But he is called "Chevalier," and he speaks like a Frenchman,' said Fluffy.

'And, being a Frenchman, of course knows nothing outside of Paris,' said Sir Midas.

'We are in the Land of Mystery,' said the doctor gravely, in a low voice. 'You have heard of the Egyptian Hall and the Temple of Mystery?'

A shudder passed through many that were

there ; but the majority were following with wild adulation the superb Koster, who with elbows slightly outward and hands turned inward was passing toward the ball-room. McFeckless accompanied him with conflicting emotions. Would he see the incomparable Princess, who was lovelier and even still more a mystery than the Chevalier ? Would she —terrible thought !—succumb to his perfections ?

III

The Princess was already there, surrounded by a crowd of admirers—equal if not superior to those who were following the superb Chevalier. Indeed, they met almost as rivals! Their eyes sought each other in splendid competition. The Chevalier turned away, dazzled and incoherent. 'She is adorable, magnificent!' he gasped to McFeckless. 'I love her on the instant! Behold, I am transported, ravished! Present me.'

Indeed, as she stood there in a strange gauzy garment of exquisite colours, apparently shapeless, yet now and then revealing her perfect figure like a bather seen through undulating billows, she was lovely. Two wands were held in her taper fingers, whose mystery only added to the general curiosity, but whose weird

and cabalistic uses were to be seen later. Her magnificent face, strange in its beauty, was stranger still, since, with perfect archæological Egyptian correctness, she presented it only in profile, at whatever angle the spectator stood. But such a profile! The words of the great Poet-King rose to McFeckless's lips: 'Her nose is a tower that looketh toward Damascus.'

He hesitated a moment, torn with love and jealousy, and then presented his friend. 'You will fall in love with her—and then—you will fall also by my hand,' he hissed in his rival's ear, and fled tumultuously.

'*Voulez-vous danser, mademoiselle?*' whispered the Chevalier in the perfect accent of the boulevardier.

'*Merci, beaucoup*,' she replied in the diplomatic courtesies of the Ambassadeurs.

They danced together, not once, but many times, to the admiration, the wonder and envy of all; to the scandalized reprobation of a proper few. Who was she? Who was he? It was easy to answer the last question: the

world rang with the reputation of 'Chevalier the Artist.' But she was still a mystery.

Perhaps they were not so to each other! He was gazing deliriously into her eyes. She was looking at him in disdainful curiosity. 'I've seen you before somewhere, haven't I?' she said at last, with a crushing significance.

He shuddered, he knew not why, and passed his hand over his high forehead. 'Yes, I go there very often,' he replied vacantly. 'But you, mademoiselle—you—I have met before?'

'Oh, ages, ages ago!' There was something weird in her emphasis.

'Ha!' said a voice near them, 'I thought so!' It was the doctor, peering at them curiously. 'And you both feel rather dazed and creepy?' He suddenly felt their pulses, lingering, however, as the Chevalier fancied, somewhat longer than necessary over the lady's wrist and beautiful arm. He then put a small round box in the Chevalier's hand, saying,

'One before each meal,' and turning to the lady with caressing professional accents said, 'We must wrap ourselves closely and endeavour to induce perspiration,' and hurried away, dragging the Chevalier with him. When they reached a secluded corner, he said, 'You had just now a kind of feeling, don't you know, as if you'd sort of been there before ; didn't you ?'

'Yes, what you call a—pre-existence,' said the Chevalier, wonderingly.

'Yes ; I have often observed that those who doubt a future state of existence have no hesitation in accepting a previous one,' said the doctor dryly. 'But come, I see from the way the crowd are hurrying that your divinity's number is up—I mean,' he corrected himself hastily, 'that she is probably dancing again.'

'Aha ! with him, the imbecile McFeckless ?' gasped the Chevalier.

'No, alone.'

She was indeed alone, in the centre of the ball-room—with outstretched arms revolving in an occult, weird, dreamy, mystic, druidical,

cabalistic circle. They now for the first time perceived the meaning of those strange wands which appeared to be attached to the many folds of her diaphanous skirts and involved her in a fleecy, whirling cloud. Yet in the wild convolutions of her garments and the mad gyrations of her figure, her face was upturned with the seraphic intensity of a devotee—and her lips parted as with the impassioned appeal for 'Light! more light!' And the appeal was answered. A flood of blue, crimson, yellow, and green radiance was alternately poured upon her from the black box of a mysterious Nubian slave in the gallery. The effect was marvellous; at one moment she appeared as a martyr in a sheet of flame, at another as an angel wrapped in white and muffled purity, and again as a nymph of the cerulean sea, and then suddenly a cloud of darkness seemed to descend upon her, through which for an instant her figure, as immaculate and perfect as a marble statue, showed distinctly—then the light went out and she vanished!

The whole assembly burst into a rapturous cry. Even the common Arab attendants who were peeping in at the doors raised their melodious native cry, 'Alloe, Fullah ! Alloe, Fullah !' again and again.

A shocked silence followed. Then the voice of Sir Midas Pyle was heard addressing Dr. Haustus Pilgrim :

'May we not presume, sir, that what we have just seen is not unlike that remarkable exhibition when I was pained to meet you one evening at the Alhambra ?'

The doctor coughed slightly. 'The Alhambra—ah, yes !—you—er—refer, I presume, to Granada and the Land of the Moor, where we last met. The music and dance are both distinctly Moorish—which, after all, is akin to the Egyptian. I am gratified indeed that your memory should be so retentive and your archæological comparison so accurate. But, see ! the ladies are retiring. Let us follow.'

IV

The intoxication produced by the performance of the Princess naturally had its reaction. The British moral soul, startled out of its hypocrisy the night before, demanded the bitter beer of self-consciousness and remorse the next morning. The ladies were now openly shocked at what they had secretly envied. Lady Pyle was, however, propitiated by the doctor's assurance that the Princess was a friend of Lady Fitz-Fulke, who had promised to lend her youthful age and aristocratic prestige to the return ball which the Princess had determined to give at her own home. 'Still, I think the Princess open to criticism,' said Sir Midas oracularly.

'Damn all criticism and critics!' burst out McFeckless, with the noble frankness of a

passionate and yet unfettered soul. Sir Midas, who employed critics in his business, as he did other base and ignoble slaves, drew up himself and his paunch and walked away.

The Chevalier cast a superb look at McFeckless. '*Voilà*! Regard me well! I shall seek out this Princess when she is with herself! Alone, *comprenez*? I shall seek her at her hotel in the Egyptian Hall! Ha! ha! I shall seek Zut-Ski! Zut!' And he made that rapid yet graceful motion of his palm against his thigh known only to the true Parisian.

'It's a rum hole where she lives, and nobody gets a sight of her,' said Flossy. 'It's like a beastly family vault, don't you know, outside, and there's a kind of nigger doorkeeper that visés you and chucks you out if you haven't the straight tip. I'll show you the way, if you like.'

'*Allons, en avant*!' said the Chevalier gaily. 'I precipitate myself there on the instant.'

'Remember!' hissed McFeckless, grasping his arm, 'you shall account to me!'

'*Bien*!' said the Chevalier, shaking him off lightly. 'All a-r-r-right.' Then, in that incomparable baritone, which had so often enthralled thousands, he moved away, trolling the first verse of the Princess's own faint, sweet, sad song of the 'Lotus Lily' that thrilled McFeckless even through the Chevalier's marked French accent:

> O a hard zing to get is ze Lotus Lillee!
> She lif in ze swamp—in ze watair chillee;
> She make your foot wet—and you look so sillee,
> But you buy her for sixpence in Piccadillee!

In half an hour the two men reached the remote suburb where the Princess lived, a gloomy, windowless building. Pausing under a low archway over which in Egyptian characters appeared the faded legend, 'Sta Ged Oor,' they found a Nubian slave blocking the dim entrance.

'I leave you here,' said Flossy hurriedly, 'as even I left once before—only then I was lightly assisted by his sandalled foot,' he added, rubbing himself thoughtfully. 'But better luck to you.'

As his companion retreated swiftly, the Chevalier turned to the slave and would have passed in, but the man stopped him. 'Got a pass, boss?'

'No,' said the Chevalier.

The man looked at him keenly. 'Oh, I see! one of de profesh.'

The Chevalier nodded haughtily. The man preceded him by devious, narrow ways and dark staircases, coming abruptly upon a small apartment where the Princess sat on a low divan. A single lamp enclosed in an ominous wire cage flared above her. Strange things lay about the floor and shelves, and from another door he could see hideous masks, frightful heads and disproportionate faces. He shuddered slightly, but recovered himself and fell on his knees before her. 'I lofe you,' he said madly. 'I have always lofed you!'

'For how long?' she asked, with a strange smile.

He covertly consulted his shirt cuff. 'For

tree tousand fife hundred and sixty-two years,' he said rapidly.

She looked at him disdainfully. 'The doctor has been putting you up to that! It won't wash! I don't refer to your shirt-cuff,' she added with deep satire.

'Adorable one!' he broke out passionately, attempting to embrace her. 'I have come to take you.' Without moving, she touched a knob in the wall. A trap-door beyond him sank, and out of the bowels of the earth leaped three indescribable demons. Then, rising, she took a cake of chalk from the table and, drawing a mystic half-circle on the floor, returned to the divan, lit a cigarette and, leaning comfortably back, said in a low, monotonous voice, 'Advance one foot within that magic line, and on that head, although it wore a crown, I launch the curse of Rome.'

'I—only wanted to take you—with a kodak,' he said, with a light laugh to conceal his confusion, as he produced the instrument from his coat-tail pocket.

'Not with that cheap box,' she said, rising with magnificent disdain. 'Come again with a decent instrument—and, perhaps——' Then, lightly humming in a pure contralto, 'I've been photographed like this—I've been photographed like that,' she summoned the slave to conduct him back, and vanished through a canvas screen, which nevertheless seemed to the dazed Chevalier to be the stony front of the pyramids.

V

'And you saw her?' said the doctor, in French.

'Yes; but the three-thousand-year gag did not work! She spotted you, *cher ami*, on the instant. And she wouldn't let me take her with my kodak.'

The doctor looked grave. 'I see,' he mused thoughtfully. 'You must have my camera—a larger one and more bulky perhaps to carry; but she will not object to that, she who has stood for full lengths. I will give you some private instructions.'

'But, *cher* doctor, this previous-existence idea—at what do you arrive?'

'There is much to say for it,' said the doctor oracularly. 'It has survived in the belief of all ages. Who can tell? That some

men in a previous existence may have been goats or apes,' continued the doctor, looking at him curiously, 'does not seem improbable! From the time of Pythagoras we have known that; but that the individual as an individual ego has been remanded or projected, has harked back or anticipated himself, is, we may say, with our powers of apperception —that is the perception that we are perceiving—is——'

But the Chevalier had fled. 'No matter,' said the doctor, 'I will see McFeckless.' He did. He found him gloomy, distraught, baleful. He felt his pulse. 'The mixture as before,' he said briefly, 'and a little innocent diversion. There is an Aunt Sally on the esplanade—two throws for a penny. It will do you good. Think no more of this woman! Listen—I wish you well; your family have always been good patients of mine. Marry some good Scotch girl—I know one with fifty thousand pounds. Let the Princess go!'

'To him—never! I will marry her! Yet,' he murmured softly to himself—'feefty thousand pun' is nae small sum. Aye! Not that I care for siller—but feefty thousand pun'! Eh, sirs!'

VI

Doctor Haustus knew that the Chevalier had again visited the Princess—although he had kept the visit a secret, and indeed was himself invisible for a day or two afterwards. At last the doctor's curiosity induced him to visit the Chevalier's apartment. Entering, he was surprised—even in that Land of Mystery—to find the room profoundly dark, smelling of Eastern drugs, and the Chevalier sitting before a large plate of glass which he was examining by the aid of a lurid ruby lamp—the only light in the weird gloom. His face was pale and distraught, his locks were dishevelled.

'*Voilà*,' he said. '*Mon Dieu*! It is my third attempt. Always the same—hideous, monstrous, unearthly! It is she, and yet it is not she!'

The doctor, professional man as he was and inured to such spectacles, was startled! The plate before him showed the Princess's face in all its beautiful contour, but only dimly veiling a ghastly death's-head below. There was the whole bony structure of the head and the eyeless sockets; even the graceful, swan-like neck showed the articulated vertebral column that supported it in all its hideous reality. The beautiful shoulders were there, dimly as in a dream—but beneath was the empty clavicle, the knotty joint, the hollow sternum and the ribs of a skeleton half-length!

The doctor's voice broke the silence. 'My friend,' he said dryly, 'you see only the truth! You see what she really is, this peerless Princess of yours. You see her as she is to-day, and you see her kinship to the bones that have lain for centuries in yonder pyramid. Yet they were once as fair as this, and this was as fair as they—in effect the same! You that have madly, impiously adored her superficial beauty, the mere dust of to-morrow, let this be

a warning to you! You that have no soul to speak of, let that suffice you! Take her and be happy. Adieu!'

Yet, as he passed out of the fitting tomb-like gloom of the apartment and descended the stairs, he murmured to himself: 'Odd that I should have lent him my camera with the Röntgen-ray attachment still on. No matter! It is not the first time that the Princess has appeared in two parts the same evening.'

VII

In spite of envy, jealousy and malice, a certain curiosity greater than all these drew everybody to the Princess Zut-Ski's ball. Lady Fitz-Fulke was there in virgin white, looking more youthful than ever, in spite of her sixty-five years and the card labelled 'Fresh paint' which somebody had playfully placed upon her enamelled shoulder. The McFecklesses, the Pyles, Flossy, the doctor, and the Chevalier—looking still anxious—were in attendance.

The mysterious Nubian doorkeeper admitted the guests through the same narrow passages, much to the disgust of Lady Pyle and the discomfiture of her paunchy husband; but on reaching a large circular interior hall, a greater surprise was in store for them. It was found

that the only entrance to the body of the hall was along a narrow ledge against the bare wall some distance from the floor, which obliged the guests to walk slowly, in single file, along this precarious strip, giving them the attitudes of an Egyptian frieze, which was suggested in the original plaster above them. It is needless to say that, while the effect was ingenious and striking from the centre of the room, where the Princess stood with a few personal friends, it was exceedingly uncomfortable to the figures themselves, in their enforced march along the ledge—especially a figure of Sir Midas Pyle's proportions. Suddenly an exclamation broke from the doctor :

'Do you see,' he said to the Princess, pointing to the figure of the Chevalier, who was filing along with his sinewy hands slightly turned inward, 'how surprisingly like he is to the first attendant on the King in the real frieze above? And that,' added the doctor, 'was none other than 'Arry Axes, the Egyptian

you are always thinking of.' And he peered curiously at her.

'Goodness me!' murmured the Princess, in an Arabic much more soft and fluent than the original gum. 'So he does—look like him.'

'And do you know you look like him, too? Would you mind taking a walk around together?'

They did, amid the acclamations of the crowd. The likeness was perfect. The Princess, however, was quite white as she eagerly rejoined the doctor.

'And this means——?' she hissed in a low whisper.

'That he is the real 'Arry Axes! Hush, not a word now! We join the dahabiyeh tonight. At daybreak you will meet him at the fourth angle of the pyramid, first turning from the Nile!'

VIII

THE crescent moon hung again over the apex of the Great Pyramid, like a silver cutting from the rosy nail of a houri. The Sphinx—mighty guesser of riddles, reader of rebuses and universal solver of missing words—looked over the unfathomable desert and these few pages, with the worried, hopeless expression of one who is obliged at last to give it up. And then the wailing voice of a woman, toiling up the steep steps of the pyramid, was heard above the creaking of the Ibis : 'Arry Axes ! Where are you ? Wait for me.'

'*J'y suis*,' said a voice from the very summit of the stupendous granite bulk, 'yet I cannot reach it.' And in that faint light the figure of a man was seen, lifting his arms wildly toward the moon.

'Arry Axes,' persisted the voice, drifting higher, 'wait for me ; we are pursued.'

And indeed it was true. A band of Nubians, headed by the doctor, was already swarming like ants up the pyramid, and the unhappy pair were secured. And when the sun rose, it was upon the white sails of the dahabiyeh, the vacant pyramid and the slumbering Sphinx.

There was great excitement at the Cairo Hotel the next morning. The Princess and the Chevalier had disappeared, and with them Alaster McFeckless, Lady Fitz-Fulke, the doctor and even his dahabiyeh! A thousand rumours had been in circulation. Sir Midas Pyle looked up from the 'Times' with his usual I-told-you-so expression.

'It is the most extraordinary thing, don't-cherknow,' said Fitz-Fulke. 'It seems that Dr. Haustus Pilgrim was here professionally—as a nerve specialist—in the treatment of hallucinations produced by neurotic conditions, you know.'

'A mad doctor, here!' gasped Sir Midas.

'Yes. The Princess, the Chevalier, McFeckless, and even my mother were all patients of his on the dahabiyeh. He believed, don't-cherknow, in humouring them and letting them follow out their cranks, under his management. The Princess was a music-hall artist who imagined she was a dead and gone Egyptian Princess—and the queerest of all, 'Arry Axes, was also a music-hall singer who imagined himself Chevalier—you know, the great coster artist—and that's how we took him for a Frenchman. McFeckless and my poor old mother were the only ones with any real rank and position—but you know what a beastly bounder Mac was, and the poor mater *did* overdo the youthful! We never called the doctor in until the day she wanted to go to a swell ball in London as Little Red Ridinghood. But the doctor writes me that the experiment was a success, and they'll be all right when they get back to London.'

'Then, it seems, sir, that you and I were the only sane ones here,' said Sir Midas furiously.

'Really it's as much as I can do to be certain about myself, old chappie,' said Fitz-Fulke, turning away.

THE END

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